

Family language policy: Core issues of an emerging field*

MILA SCHWARTZ

Abstract

Research in the field of minority language maintenance and loss regards the family as the central driving force in children's language socialization within the context of both minority and majority languages. The present review of current literature focuses on the emerging field of family language policy and addresses the following three components: ideology, management and practice. The integrated survey reviews research on the intra-family factors that can drive family language policy, the manner in which parents (mostly immigrants) and children cope with the minority-majority language reality, and the ways in which parents conduct their language policy at home.

Keywords: language maintenance; family language policy; research methodology.

1. The scope of the present review

From its inception, research in the field of language maintenance and shift has underscored the critical role of the family in the preservation of immigrant and ethnic minority languages (also referred to here as L1; home language, or heritage language). The review focuses on the newly emerging field of family language policy, which according to King et al. (2008) "provides an integrated overview of research on how languages are managed, learned and negotiated within families" (2008: 907). In particular, the present paper focuses on how parents (mostly immigrants) face the challenges of the minority-majority language reality, in which children generally grow up with the minority language spoken at home and the majority language spoken in the community.

Research on family language policy (FLP) incorporates analysis of language ideology, practice and management, which were classified by Spolsky (2004) as components of the language policy model with respect to the speech community. In distinguishing these three components, Spolsky (2004: 5) notes "... language practices – the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire; its language beliefs or ideology – the beliefs about language and language use; and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management." Using this model at the family level enables us to integrate the separate components within a structural, flexible, and expandable framework.

Although the concept of FLP has been defined only recently, existing research surveys reveal that a focus on family language ideology, practice, and management arouses keen interest worldwide. The present review of a narrow period (approximately 1998–2008) includes research that takes a close look, from a socio-linguistic and socio-psychological perspective, at the full complexity that parents face in their efforts to transmit the home language to the second-generation immigrants and ethnic minority children. Therefore, the review addresses the studies that investigated: (a) the role of the family in home language maintenance; (b) intra-family factors related to FLP; (c) family language ideology and practice; (d) family language practice and management; (e) the challenges of FLP; (f) methodologies of FLP research; and (g) further research directions. Note that the questions of language contact, social networks, and friendship networks are not within the scope of the present review.

2. The role of the family in home language maintenance

The family is considered to be an extremely important domain for studying language policy because of its critical role in forming the child's linguistic environment. Fishman (1991), an early proponent of proactive language maintenance research, called for a reversal of language shift (RLS) through efforts to retain ethnic languages at the level of the family and the community. According to Fishman (1991), the family contains a natural boundary that serves as a bulwark against outside pressures. Association with intimacy and privacy makes the family particularly resistant to outside competition and substitution. Although the modern urban family has lost much of its socialization power, it is nevertheless "the most common and inescapable basis of mother tongue transmission, bonding, use and stabilization" (1991: 94). Fishman (2001) showed that the desire to maintain and transmit the home language is not anti-modern and represents a welcome alternative to complete globalization. More specifi-

cally, Fishman (2000) identified the most important point of intergenerational language transfer as the use of the ethnic language at home by women of childbearing age with their children, because the family and community are critical for the maintenance of the home language. Therefore, focusing on the nuclear traditional family with children we can explore more closely the children's language socialization within the context of both minority and majority languages (Spolsky 2007), in other words, the way in which "younger children . . . through interactions with older and more experienced persons, acquire the knowledge and practices that are necessary for them to function as, and be regarded as, competent members of the communities" (Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez 2002: 341).

3. Intra-family factors of FLP

Several elements in the family's background appear to be related to FLP. In exploring the factors closely linked to the parents' decision on whether to abandon or reinforce the heritage language, some of the studies refer to elements in the social and community background, which are outside the family domain, as for example ethnolinguistic vitality aspects (Giles et al. 1977) and community language acculturation patterns (such as power relationships) (Lambert and Taylor 1996). The present review focuses on several demographic, socio-cultural, and psychological factors that were found to be directly related to family background and could drive FLP.

3.1. *Family structure*

Family structure, in particular the presence of older children and sibling position, plays an importance role in intergenerational L1 transmission (Baker 2001; Fishman 1991; Harris 1995; Spolsky 2007; Wong Fillmore 1991). Older siblings seems to play an essential role in the language socialization of the younger ones (Kyratzis 2004; Spolsky 2007; Zhu and Li 2005), but the direction of their influence remains equivocal. Spolsky (2007) argues that the older children bring the majority language into the home and speak it occasionally with the parents and regularly with younger siblings. There is accumulating evidence about the role of older siblings as mediators in the younger siblings' majority language literacy among immigrant families (Gregory 2004; La Piedra and Romo 2003). However, there is also the opposite example of interaction between older and siblings in the case of the multi-children family described by Kopeliovich (forthcoming). In this family, all the siblings followed their mother's rules of strictly

speaking the home language with infants and toddlers at least until they started their formal preschool education. We know that the older siblings affect FLP, but we lack detailed studies and have few clear indications regarding actual language interactions between siblings at home.

3.2. *Parental education*

Findings concerning parental education are inconsistent. It has often been claimed that ethno-linguistic minorities need a strong educational experience in their own language and tradition in order to maintain their mother tongue and ethnic identity (Kloss 1966; Lambert and Taylor 1996; Allard and Landry 1992). King and Fogle (2006) found a high level of education relative to the total population among American families promoting heritage language retention and bilingual education. At the same time, Doucet (1991) and Harres (1989) found that the opposite was true, so that the higher the educational level of the informants was, the greater their shift away from L1 usage. Results concerning socio-economic status (SES) were also contradictory: some families of lower SES were favorably disposed toward language shift, whereas families from higher SES favored language maintenance (Williams 1987; Lambert and Taylor 1996). However, other studies point in the opposite direction, indicating that high SES is likely to result in language shift (Harres 1989).

3.3. *Acculturation of the parents*

Another important factor affecting FLP is the parents' acculturation to the host country's culture. Acculturation is the process of adapting to a new culture. It has been found that the younger the age of the immigrant at arrival, the greater the language shift is (Doucet 1991). Age at arrival was also found to correlate with linguistic habits and behaviors, with older members of the community being the more traditional speakers and using L1 more frequently (Clyne 1982). Similarly, the length of residence of immigrant families in the host country was observed to be strongly associated with both L2 proficiency and L1 attrition among immigrant children (Baker 2001). The longer the time spent in the host country, the better the command of L2 was and the greater the language shift.

Finally, cultural identification with the host country and the country of origin are significant factors in the formation of FLP among immigrants. For example, Pease-Alvarez (2003) conducted in-depth interviews with 63 parents who were first and second generation immigrants from Mexico in California. The findings point to a strong tendency of some participants to abandon the use of

Spanish with their children and adopt English monolingual norms and Anglo values in an effort to improve their social status and new cultural identity, and to enjoy the benefits associated with becoming Americans. In another example, research on the recent wave of Russian-Jewish immigrants to Israel shows both the powerful assertion of the immigrants' original cultural identity (Russian) and their openness to possessing a strong Jewish identity (Ben-Rafael et al. 1997; Donitsa-Schmidt 1999). In sum, it is clear that the cultural identity of the immigrant parents is strongly linked to interfamily aspects (e.g., economic and social status of the language minority group, language and culture pride and awareness).

3.4. *Family cohesiveness and emotional relations*

Research conducted by Wong Fillmore (2000), Okita (2002) and Tannenbaum (2005) addressed directly for the first time the emotional aspects of home language maintenance or loss. The preservation of L1 was found to be relevant not only to the survival of the minority language from a purely linguistic perspective, but also as a link between the generations and cultural values of the ethnolinguistic group (Wong Fillmore 2000; Tannenbaum and Howie 2002). Children are brought up to become members of their cultural group in part by the way in which their parents interact and use heritage language with them, especially in early childhood. Parents often view the children's socialization into their culture through use of the home language as a positive symbol of cultural pride and a tool that strengthens family cohesion. By contrast, a language shift in the family leads by the children (Spolsky 2004, 2007), can be expressed in the conflicting intergenerational talks about social, cultural and linguistic practice (Caldas and Caron-Caldas 2002; Hua 2008) and has a negative effect on family relations if adults and children speak different languages (Wong Fillmore 2000).

The parents' initial decision on language maintenance or shift may be strongly related to complex emotional processes. Tannenbaum (2005) analyzed the link between past and present family relations on one hand and home language maintenance on the other among immigrant families in Australia in light of psychological motives and emotional aspects. To the extent that home language maintenance can serve as a powerful tool for cohesion between generations of immigrants, its loss can contribute greatly to creating emotional distance between past and present. Tannenbaum (2005) brings several examples of immigrant narratives reflecting a tendency to build a barrier between their painful childhood experiences in the country of origin and their present "rehabilitation" in the host country through L1 loss and shifting to L2 in family communication. Lina, who immigrated to Australia from the former Soviet Union (FSU), ac-

knowledged her conscious choice of English (L2) for family language practice as her way to build a “different kind of family” than hers was:

I realized that I had hoped to have a completely different life, a different family. I didn’t want to raise my boys like my parents had raised me . . . I was never very close to my brother and sister, and never knew much about my parents’ own life. They did not tell me much about themselves, about their *problems, about their own childhood.* (Tannenbaum 2005: 237)

Tannenbaum (2005) noted that the barriers immigrants erect between their past and present as a way to establish a “different family” do not work: “Their failure to use their mother tongue with their children may be one aspect of the tendency to detach themselves from their own past and both [parents] feel that, to some extent, it is alienating them from their sons.” (Tannenbaum 2005: 245).

Okita (2002) also described the phenomenon of native language avoidance among Japanese mothers in the UK married to English men. These mothers decided at the outset to use English with their children. The reasons for parents not to speak their native language with their children have to do with their attitudes and personal experiences with ethnicity. Okita identified two reasons underlying the choice of English, both linked to the mothers’ childhood experiences: dislike of the “Japanese way” of relating to children and avoiding the preservation of old ties with their families in Japan. These mothers reported negative experiences with their families in Japan.

Well, it was always work, work, work. We hardly had dinner together, just on New Year’s Day . . . Family ties . . . I didn’t have it . . . My father did what he wanted to do and my mother suffered from it. (Fumi Findlay in Okita 2002: 92)

Moreover, the Japanese language is strongly associated with the behavior patterns of the “Japanese way”.

When I speak in Japanese, I become like a Japanese mother and I don’t like it. (Mrs. Inwood in Okita 2002: 92)

In sum, in-depth investigation of the interaction between the parental decision about the language of childrearing is a critical step in the realization of FLP. Focusing on the inner world of immigrants by means of ethnographic interviews contributes a new perspective to the study of home language retention as a social and psychological phenomenon.

4. Family language ideology and practice

Recent research on FLP exposes the full complexity and non-linearity of relationships between parental language ideology and actual language practice and management. On one hand, developmental psychologists suggest that parents' ideas motivate their practices, which in turn are strong determinants of the children's development (De Houwer 1999; Johnson and Martin 1985). In both monolingual and bilingual contexts, children's linguistic environments are shaped to a large degree by the parents' beliefs and attitudes, which constitute the primary environments of early childhood. Parental beliefs about how children acquire language or languages (L1 or L2) and about their own roles in this process appear to have a substantial effect on the parents' linguistic behavior (language practice and management) toward their children (De Houwer 1999; Spolsky 2007). For example, Barkhuizen (2006) found that Afrikaans-speaking South African immigrant parents in New Zealand believed that their children's transition to English would be smooth if they were socialized in English during the pre-immigration stage.

On the other hand, the declared language ideology of one or both parents does not necessarily coincide with the strategies followed consciously or unconsciously in language practice with children (De Houwer 1999; Goodz 1994; King 2000; Kopeliovich forthcoming; Schwartz 2008; Spolsky 2004). For example, in a dramatic description of the parents' feelings of dissatisfaction with L1 transmission, Kopeliovich (forthcoming) investigated FLP in one immigrant family from the FSU in Israel. Using in-depth interviews and observations, Kopeliovich uncovered the hidden sides of FLP and showed how the pro-activist mother gradually reconsidered her LP and renounced her strategy of overt interference with the children linguistic behavior. The children's resistance to use of Russian (L1) at home after immigration to Israel, and sharp conflicts within the family forced the mother to look for new solutions and change her "Russian only" practice at home. Furthermore, her awareness of the inconsistency between her ideology and the actual language practice was painful and disappointing. This discrepancy has also been observed at the structural linguistic level. For instance, contact-linguistic analysis (Myers-Scotton 2002) of mother-child communication revealed many types of contact varieties combining Hebrew and Russian elements within the mother's discourse.

Along the same lines, Schwartz (2008) found discrepancies between immigrant parents' declared commitment to L1 maintenance among second generation Russian-Hebrew speaking children and their reports of actual language practice with their children and of written language management at home. Although almost all parents reported having positive attitudes toward Russian

language preservation, only 27% stated that they themselves conducted reading instruction. Moreover, in families that practice code-mixing, the second generation showed lesser knowledge of Russian (L1) vocabulary. At the same time, it was found that the children's positive attitude toward the development of both languages at home and toward heritage literacy acquisition at school contributed significantly to their lexical knowledge of L1. Thus, the children's reports about their attitudes toward L1 maintenance, in contrast to those of their parents, seem to reflect the real family language policy and appear to be an indicator of the effectiveness of their parents' efforts to preserve the Russian language at home. To conclude, the data reveal that the links between the parents' language ideology, practice, and management may be indirect and even conflicting.

5. Practice and management

Family language practice refers to patterns of language choice and preference within the family and in different contexts. This practice could reflect socio-cultural changes in intergenerational interactions within immigrant families. Hua's (2008) qualitative study of Chinese immigrant families in the UK vividly displayed conflict talk between Chinese mothers and their second generation adolescent children. The mothers positioned their cultural norms and customs (i.e., the cultural principle of reciprocity) which are valued in Chinese ethnic communities while the children, in turn, tried to challenge the family's socio-cultural values. Both the mothers and the children used a wide repertoire of linguistic resources (e.g., codeswitching from English to Mandarin and vice versa, children's choice of the English pronoun *you* instead of the Chinese polite form *nin* when speaking to their mothers) in order to stress their socio-cultural perspectives.

Furthermore, recent studies by Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2000, 2002) pointed out that children's preferences for either of their two languages is highly sensitive to environmental context. The researchers coined the term "children's bilingual preference", which they measured by constructing a bilingual preference ratio (BPR), aiming to understand the effect of external and internal influences on the language preferences of their own three English-French speaking bilingual children as they progressed through adolescence. They calculated the BPR weekly using audio-taped recordings of family mealtime conversation over a period of six years in which the family spent the school years in English-speaking Louisiana and summer vacations in French-speaking Québec. The parents, a native French-speaking Canadian mother and a native English-speaking father, decided to raise their children in a predominantly French-speaking home.

Consequently, both parents strongly supported a preference for French in family communication. During the academic year, the children were exposed to predominantly English speaking in Louisiana, but the twin girls were enrolled in a French immersion program during 5 years of the 6 years of the study, whereas their older brother spent only one semester in that school. In Québec, the children lived in an entirely French-speaking social environment.

Upon entering adolescence, the older son's language behavior underwent a striking shift in preference to the socially dominant English, as an expression of disengagement from family control. The boy also began to tease his sisters for speaking French. In time, the twins' French-speaking also dropped dramatically despite the fact that they were enrolled in a French immersion program and had friends from French-speaking homes. Thus, despite the predominantly native French-speaking milieu, the adolescents preferred English as the vernacular for both peer-peer social function and communication with their parents. At the same time, during their relatively short involvement within the French-speaking Québec context, all three children manifested massive growth in the number of French words spoken around the family dinner table, in particular after returning from summer camp. In sum, this in-depth case study underscored the overwhelming influence of peer control on language practice when the children enter adolescence. The data support the Group Socialization Theory (Harris 1995). It stresses that children favor the behavioral system of the peer group outside the home over the one they acquire at home. Harris used the case of bilingual families to illustrate this claim because ethnic minority children tend to shift from the heritage language to the dominant one and acquire the pronunciation of their peers rather than that of their parents.

Although the parents were shocked by the pervasive nature of the social force and felt helpless in their efforts to maintain French, they did not attempt to impose their language ideology by rigid rules.

There is sufficient data on immigrant adults' language preferences (Donitsa-Schmidt 1999; Fishman 1991; Hakuta and D'Andrea 1992; La Piedra and Romo 2003). These studies provide clear evidence for domain separation, that is, a preference for the home language in the private domain (for example, in intimate communication with spouse and children) and the use of L2 largely in public domain (at work and within the framework of host country institutions, such as government agencies). There is less data about the children's language preferences. To investigate this issue, Tannenbaum (2003) administered questionnaires to 307 children, aged 8 to 11 years, living in Sydney, Australia, and to one of their immigrant parents from various ethnic backgrounds. The findings suggest that parents and children differ in their language maintenance patterns: whereas parents differentiated between the public and intimate domains even when com-

municating with their child, and were rather context sensitive, the children's choices of language were not linked to specific domains of interaction with the parents, with a strong tendency to use the majority language across domains. These findings have been attributed to the possible lack of relevance of domain separation for children for whom intimate interactions do not result in higher use of the home language and may not be tied to closeness, as is the case for their parents. In analyzing this finding, Tannenbaum (2003) suggested that the lack of domain effect among the children may also be explained by methodological constraints, namely by the fact that the focus was only on the children's language interactions with parents, which may restrict the generalizability of the data.

Family language management refers to "efforts to control the language of family members, especially children" (Spolsky 2007: 430). It starts with the parents' decision about the language choice to be used with the children. This initial decision is considered to be a crucial factor in L1 retention (Fishman 1991; Spolsky 2007). At the same time, the absence of an explicit decision concerning initial language choice in communication with the children may be interpreted, according to Spolsky and Shohamy (1999), as an absence of a conscious and knowledgeable FLP. Okita (2002) and Schwartz et al. (forthcoming) found that in reality bilingual family decisions regarding initial language use do not always involve clear processes and arise at times spontaneously, without discussion. The unplanned pattern of parental behavior may simply reflect the fact that most of the parents are not professional linguists (Okita 2002). This pattern can also be attributed to the shortage of educational professionals and of specialized literature on raising bilingual children in countries without a long-standing tradition of training professional staff for bilingual education (e.g., Israel, France). Finally, as was suggested by Schwartz (2008), the absence of a clearly defined decision at the family level may also reflect a common situation in the country or region of the family's residence regarding language practice, as in the case of Israel, where there is no law defining state LP (Spolsky and Shohamy 1999).

We distinguish two central tendencies in the data on family language management: first, seeking external control for FLP by searching for a supporting socio-linguistic environment; second, controlling the home language environment (establishing family cultural traditions and rituals strongly associated with L1 or a regime of penalties and rewards for using a particular language at home). Note that all these tendencies may co-exist within a single family and appear in considerably modified presentations under different conditions.

5.1. *External control for FLP*

It has been found that parents, searching for external control for a supporting socio-linguistic environment, can plan several relevant strategies and implement them. For example, in his study of FLP among Afrikaans-speaking South African immigrants living in New Zealand Barkhuizen (2006) used in-depth narrative interviews and found a tendency among parents to plan for their children's maximum exposure to L1, including the choice of suburbs with a high concentration of South African immigrants. Recall that in the case of the three bilingual English-French speaking adolescents (Caldas and Caron-Caldas 2002), it was the external situation (enrolling the children in an all-French speaking biking excursion and summer camp in Québec) rather than the parents' practices and wishes that accounted for their preference for French over English at home.

The choice of bilingual education serves as an important link in the practical realization of family language ideology. There is clear consensus about the critical role of early education in the maintenance and intergenerational transmission of the minority language (Baker 2001; Fishman 1991; Spolsky 2007; Wong Fillmore 1991). Baker (2001) distinguished two forms of early education for second generation immigrants: weak forms, in which children are educated only through the medium of the majority language, and strong forms, that permit substantial support for the children's L1 maintenance in an environment of two reciprocally enriching languages and cultures. Note that 'strong' bilingual education creates an additive bilingual environment (Lambert 1975), in which there is substantial support for children to maintain their L1 as they acquire an additional language. By contrast, acquisition of the majority language (L2) at the expense of the children's L1, as in a case of 'weak' bilingual schooling, results in a subtractive bilingual environment.

What are the distinctive characteristics of parents who choose bilingual education for their children? King and Fogle (2006) aimed primarily at providing an in-depth description of how parents initially establish their family language policy and decide about the children's education. Twenty-four middle-class, highly educated parents in the U.S. participated in the ethnographic interviews and reported on their motives for choosing a bilingual environment for their Spanish-English speaking children. The study found that parents often relate critically to any source of available advice or information concerning the education of minority language children. Moreover, even when the parents explained their choice of additive bilingualism by reference to the popular press and parenting advice literature, they were motivated primarily by their personal experience with language learning and practice in their childhood and in their extended

family. Many parents believed that they had missed opportunities by not being educated bilingually, which shaped their decision to raise their children within an additive context. Furthermore, the parents' personal sources of information were often linked to a critical evaluation of their relatives' decisions not to expose their children to the heritage language. Thus, the parents' decisions about bilingual education emerged as an effort to provide good parenting to their children against a background of unsuccessful examples from their own childhood or that of other family members.

To explore the factors favoring the choice of early bilingual vs. monolingual education among second generation immigrants, Schwartz et al. (forthcoming) proposed an extended model of FLP by combining two components: the context of FLP and its consequences. The context refers to the structure of the family (marital status and the number and order of children), its socio-economic status and educational level; variables related to the parents' acculturation in the host country (duration of residence in the host country, age at immigration, education in the host country, and cultural self-identification); the child's history; the parents' language competence, and their attitudes and expectations regarding the child. The consequences of FLP refer to the child's language competence; changes in the child's language competence and practice upon entering an educational institutions; and the parents' satisfaction with these institutions. The research population consisted of young adult Russian-speaking immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union (FSU). The study has shown that variations in the parents' choice of bilingual vs. monolingual education can be explained in part by three factors related to FLP and its background: the number of children in the family, the parents' identification with Russian culture, and the children's well-being as a motivating factor in the choice of educational setting. The significant link between the parents' preference for bilingual education and the relatively small number of children in the family has been explained by two complementary factors. First, it is possible that couples with fewer children have more opportunities for offering early bilingual education to their children than have couples with more children because of diminished time pressure and fewer competing demands. Second, it is possible that in a single-child family language management is free of the sibling effect that promotes L2 shift, which may have a covert effect on the parents' decision on educational choice. Findings also suggest that the parents' choice of bilingual education has been motivated not only by pure reasons of L1 maintenance but also by so-called 'non-language' related factors such as the quality of education, student-teacher relations, and the quality of the educational facilities.

In establishing outside control of the socio-linguistic environment, parents can rely on ethnic religious institutions to provide second generation children

with a context for enhancing both their home language and their identity. Park and Sarkar (2007), who explored Korean immigrant parents' attitudes toward heritage language maintenance in Canada, found that parents view the Korean church, which promotes Korean heritage schools and worship services, as a key instrument for "creating social, linguistic, and cultural centers" (Park and Sarkar 2007: 229) for immigrants and the second generation.

5.2. *Internal control for FLP*

When parents enforce their authority, especially when the children are very young, they may insist on the children complying with the language policies they favor. The pro-activist mother in Kopeliovich's (forthcoming) study reported on her vigorous interference with her children's language choice, coercing them to use Russian (L1), upbraiding them for code-switching to L2, and correcting L1 mistakes during the first years in the host country. The mother acknowledged, however, these strategies were "futile and exhausting" (Kopeliovich forthcoming: 17), and resulted in confrontations with the children. At the same time, according to the children's reports, the father's non-deliberate tactics of language management, by establishing family cultural traditions and rituals strongly associated with L1, were rather fruitful. The father succeeded in influencing the children to use Russian by choosing attractive texts from Russian literature, becoming "an infinite source of bilingual humor based on Hebrew-Russian word puns, rhymes, deliberate misinterpretation of culturally unique idioms . . ." (Kopeliovich forthcoming: 14). Kopeliovich concluded that the father's approach to L1 retention was based on stressing the bilingual phenomenon as asset and not as a burden by intermingling the two languages in joyful play.

6. Challenges of FLP

Some of the studies presented above suggest that the process of raising children bilingually requires intellectual and emotional investment and appears to be frustrating and burdensome. Okita (2002), Pease-Alvarez (2003) and Caldas and Carol-Caldas (2002) have examined the efforts related to heritage language transmission with reference to the notion of 'invisible work' or emotionally demanding work. As noted above, Okita (2002) analyzed the invisible work of minority language transmission in intermarried Japanese-British families. Her approach to Japanese language transmission within these families is greatly inspired by the views of DeVault (1987) and Delphy and Leonard (1992) on

the nature of housework as invisible and emotionally demanding work. According to De Vault (1987), family work includes complicated invisible work such as planning and management (monitoring and controlling the children, coordinating schedules, and organizing events). This work is invisible “because it is largely mental”, distributed over time, and becoming visible only when it is not completed. Okita’s (2002) concept of invisible work includes the term “pro-activist mothers” who are highly motivated to transfer Japanese to their children. These full-time homemakers reported having difficulty in coping with conflicting language demands, especially when they felt personal responsibility for their children’s perceived limitation in English because of the mothers’ Japanese language project. Feeling that the school’s acceptance of bilingualism was contingent upon “doing very well in English”, part of them gradually abandoned their use of Japanese. At the same time, they experienced a conflict when it later became apparent that their children did not learn Japanese. Another outcome of active Japanese nurturing has been discouraging their English-speaking partners from active participation in childrearing. Okita stressed the emotional demands involved in raising bilingual children in intermarried families. The demands were manifest in at least four areas: dealing with internal conflicts such as the ones described above, balancing the various needs of the family, the need for continuous monitoring, and feeling responsible for the children mastering both languages.

The pro-activist mothers studied by Okita’s were able to devote themselves full-time for child rearing. By contrast, in the families of Mexican descent investigated by Pease-Alvarez (2003), the immigrant mothers who continue to be the active language-socialization agents available to their children had to work outside the home, resulting in weaker Spanish (L1) retention at home. For example, Ms. Suarez described how the need to work outside the home hampered her efforts to maintain the heritage language:

I think a lot of parents are working and I don’t think they have the time to get their kids It’s a lot of work. And I have to say that first hand that I wish I could sit and spend a couple of hours a day because I’m sure I could teach them as well as the school could and you know that’s so expensive. We don’t have the time. You know we are living at such a fast paced life. Everything is so expensive, two working parents, you are constantly going, so you basically just let it go, and they start to lose it. (Pease-Alvarez 2003: 18)

In addressing the emotional demands of raising children bilingually, Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002) noted their astonishment and shock when despite their efforts to maintain the French language in the home (the mother’s L1) in a context of English dominance, the children’s command of French deteriorated

substantially when they entered adolescence, to the point of causing irritation to the parents.

The data suggest the presence of a gap between the parents' role as language teachers (see Döpke 1988, 1992) who are expected to insist on minority language use and employ language teaching techniques possibly acquired through professional counseling, and the reality within authentic families.

7. FLP research methodologies

There is great diversity of methodological tools used to investigate FLP, which may constrain the ability to compare the data and generalize the findings. At the same time, the variety of tools reflects the complexity of FLP research, which addresses a wide range of socio-linguistic contexts and demands an interdisciplinary approach.

Perhaps the most frequent method used in FLP research is the qualitative approach manifest in in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The importance of interviews cannot be over-emphasized because they provide a sensitive method for understanding the processes taking place within the family. At the same time, there is a growing tendency for methodological triangulation in FLP research, with multiple methods required to explore the largely invisible processes and influences that arise in the course of intergenerational language transmission within families (Kopeliovich forthcoming; Okita 2002; Tannenbaum 2003).

For example, Okita (2002) proposed a two-stage approach for data collection, first investigating the distinctive features of the target community (Japanese-British intermarried families in the UK) in a general sense through an exploratory survey, then, providing in-depth, qualitative insight into the family language policy and childrearing, using the life story method in separate, semi-structured interviews of mothers and fathers. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, FLP researchers can identify the common characteristics of families belonging to a distinct community or sub-group. The rich source of descriptive data obtained from the survey forms the background for the deeper understanding of unique processes involved in FLP within one or several families of the target group.

Discussing the mixing of methods, Brannen emphasized the importance of these strategies, generally understood as "more than one method of investigation and hence more than one type of data" (Brannen 1992: 11). Mackey and Gass defined methodological triangulation as a methodology that "entails the use of multiple, independent methods of obtaining data in a single investigation in order

to arrive at the same research findings” (Mackey and Gass 2005: 181). Johnson saw the value of triangulation in that it “reduces observer or interviewer bias and enhances the validity and reliability of the information” (Johnson 1992: 146). In sum, the growing practice of using qualitative and quantitative data in FLP research demonstrates that the two research approaches should not be viewed as opposing poles in a dichotomy but rather as complementary tools for investigating complex phenomena.

Another important methodological issue in FLP research is the incorporation of the children’s perspectives in the parental data. Until now, relatively few studies collected data on FLP from both parents and children. At the same time, using the children’s reports on FLP, observing their language socialization, and measuring their L1/L2 mastery can strengthen considerably the validity of data collected from parents. When considering the strengths and limitations of the data derived from children’s reports, we should take into account that (a) even if we cannot assume that the children’s views are fully reflected in what they say, they are not likely to try to please the researcher by providing expected answers during the interviews (i.e., the halo effect), and (b) the children’s language ideology seems to be affected considerably both by parental language ideology and by the actual implementation of the language policy at home.

8. Further research directions

The present review focused on the social, psychological, educational, and linguistic facets of intergenerational language transmission by applying Spolsky’s model of LP in a family context. The empirical data reflect the complexity and sometimes inconsistency of the parents’ invisible work invested in the children’s socialization in the home language. Although the notion of FLP is relatively new, the studies described above contributed significantly to our understanding of the FLP phenomenon and established a productive basis for the future research. At the same time, questions still outnumber the answers. First, there is a need for focused research on FLP to address the links between its components, taking into account its background and consequences by applying methodological triangulation. It is still unclear to what extent the parents’ ethnic roots are related to their FLP, what are the unique FLP features of various ethno-linguistic communities, and what are those applicable to other ethno-linguistic communities.

Additional questions concern the longitudinal consequences of FLP and the manner in which it changes over time and possible directions in modifying the FLP as the children grow older. It is reasonable to assume that the parents’ language strategies with pre-school children differ from those with children

in elementary school and with adolescents. Given that the role of peers in the language socialization of bilingual children increases, as the children grow older, it would be important to observe, for example, parents' tendency to seek better suited environments for L1 retention (Caldas and Caron-Caldas 2002; Spolsky 2007).

Finally, as the main criterion of successful FLP is the children's progress in L1, adding objective measures of linguistic behavior (e.g., conducting lexical and morpho-syntactic knowledge tests) could verify and reinforce the FLP data collected based on the parents' and children's perceptions. There is a need for insight into bilingual homes to examine language strategies within authentic environments, using ethnographic observations. These methodological approaches can contribute to the validity of research. Finally, future research must also take into account the interdisciplinary nature of FLP and bring together such disciplines as linguistics, sociology, and education to promote research in this area.

Oranim College of Education and University of Haifa

Note

- * This paper was supported by the grants awarded to Dr. Mila Schwartz by Kreitman Postdoctoral fellowship (Ben-Gurion University, Beer-Sheva, Israel) and by the Edmond J. SAFRA Foundation. The funders had no role in decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript. I am grateful to Dr. Victor Moin for his useful comments.

References

- Allard, R. & R. Landry. 1992. Ethnolinguistic vitality beliefs and language maintenance and loss. In W. Fase, K. Jaspaert & S. Kroon (eds.), *Maintenance and loss of minority languages*, 173–195. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Baker, C. 2001. *Foundation of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Barkhuizen, G.. 2006. Immigrant parents' perceptions of their children's language practices: Afrikaans speakers living in New Zealand. *Language Awareness* 15. 63–77.
- Ben-Rafael, E., E. Olshtain & I. Geijst. 1997. Identity and language: The social insertion of Soviet Jews in Israel. In N. Levin-Epstein, Y. Ro'i & P. Ritterband (eds.), *Russian Jews on three continents: Migration and Resettlement*, 364–388. London: Frank Cass.
- Brannen, J. (ed.). 1992. *Mixing methods: Qualitative and quantitative research*. Aldershot: Avebury.

- Caldas, S. & S. Caron-Caldas. 2000. The influence of family, school, and community on bilingual preference: Results from a Louisiana/Quebec case study. *Journal of Applied Psycholinguistics* 21(3). 365–381.
- Caldas, S. & S. Caron-Caldas. 2002. A sociolinguistic analysis of the language preferences of adolescent bilinguals: Shifting allegiances and developing identities. *Applied Linguistics* 23(4). 490–514.
- Clyne, M. 1982. *Multilingual Australia*. Melbourne: River Seine.
- De Houwer, A. 1999. Environmental factors in early bilingual development: The role of parental beliefs and attitudes. In G. Extra & L. Verhoeven (eds.), *Bilingualism and migration*, 75–96. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Delphy, C. & D. Leonard. 1992. *Familiar exploitation: A new analysis of marriage in contemporary Western societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- DeVault, M.. 1987. Doing housework: Feeding and family life. In N. Gerstel & H. Gross (eds.), *Families and work*. Philadelphia, 178–191. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Donitsa-Schmidt, S. 1999. *Language maintenance or shift – Determinants of language choice among Soviet immigrants in Israel*. Toronto: University of Toronto unpublished doctoral thesis.
- Döpke, S. 1988. The role of parental teaching techniques in bilingual German-English families. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 72. 101–112.
- Döpke, S.. 1992. *One parent one language: An interactional approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Doucet, J. 1991. First generation of Serbo-Croatian speakers in Queensland: Language maintenance and language shift. In S. Romaine (ed.), *Language in Australia*, 270–284. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fishman, J. A. 1991. *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Fishman, J. A. 2000. Reversing language shift: RSL theory and practice revisited. In G. Kindell & M. P. Lewis (eds.), *Assessing ethnolinguistic vitality: Theory and practice; Selected papers from the Third International Language Assessment conference*, 1–25. *Publications in Sociolinguistics* 3. Dallas: SIL International.
- Fishman, J. A. 2001. From theory to practice (and vice versa): Review, reconsideration and reiteration. In J. A. Fishman (ed.), *Can threatened languages be saved?*, 451–483. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Garrett, P. B. & P. Baquedano-Lopez. 2002. Language socialisation: Reproduction and continuity, transformation and change. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31(1). 339–361.
- Giles, H., R. Bourhis & D. Taylor. 1977. Towards a theory of language in ethnic group relations. In H. Giles (ed.), *Language, ethnicity and intergroup relations*, 307–348. London: Academic Press.
- Goodz, N. 1994. Interactions between parents and children in bilingual families. In F. Genesee (ed.), *Educating second language children*, 61–81. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Gregory, E. 2004. "Invisible" teachers of literacy: Collusion between siblings and teachers in creating classroom cultures. *Literacy* 38(2) 97–105.
- Hakuta, K. & D. Andrea. 1992. Some properties of bilingual maintenance and loss in Mexican background high school students. *Applied Linguistics* 13. 72–99.
- Harres, R.. 1989. The search for minority teachers. *Los Angeles Times* September 27. A1, A18.
- Harris, J. R. 1995. Where is the child's environment? A group socialization theory of development. *Psychological Review* 103(3). 458–489.
- Hua, Z.. 2008. Duelling languages, duelling values: Codeswitching in bilingual intergenerational conflict talk in diasporic families. *Journal of Pragmatics* 40. 1799–1816.
- Johnson, R. C.. 1992. Offspring of cross-race and cross-ethnic marriages in Hawaii. In M. P. P. Root (ed.), *Racially mixed people in America*, 239–249. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Johnson, J. & C. Martin. 1985. Parents' beliefs and home language environments: Effects on cognitive development. In I. Sigel (ed.), *Parental belief systems. The psychological consequences for children*, 25–50. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- King, K. 2000. Language ideologies and heritage language education. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 3(3). 167–184.
- King, K. & L. Fogle. 2006. Bilingual parenting as good parenting: Parents' perspectives on family language policy for additive bilingualism. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 9(6). 695–712.
- King, K., L. Fogle & A. Logan-Terry. 2008. Family language policy. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 2(5). 907–922.
- Kloss, H. 1966. German-American language maintenance efforts. In J. A. Fishman (ed.), *Language loyalty in the United States: The maintenance and perpetuation of non-English mother tongues by American ethnic and religious groups*, 206–252. The Hague: Mouton.
- Kopeliovich, S. Forthcoming. Family language policy: From a case study of a Russian-Hebrew bilingual family towards a theoretical framework. *Diaspora, Indigenous and Minority Education* 4(2).
- Kyratzis, A. 2004. Talk and interaction among children and the co-construction of peer groups and peer culture. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33(1). 625–649.
- Lambert, W. E. 1975. Culture and language as factors in learning and education. In A. Worlfgang (ed.), *Education of immigrant students*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Lambert, W. E. & D. M. Taylor. 1996. Language in the lives of ethnic minorities: Cuban American families in Miami. *Applied Linguistics* 17(4). 477–500.
- La Piedra, M. & H. Romo. 2003. Collaborative literacy in a Mexican immigrant household: The role of sibling mediators in the socialization of pre-school learners. In R. Bayley & S. Schecter (eds.), *Language socialization in bilingual and multilingual societies*, 44–61. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Mackey, A. & S. M. Gass. 2005. *Second language research: Methodology and Design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Myers-Scotton, C. 2002. *Contact linguistics: Bilingual encounters and grammatical outcomes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Okita, T. 2002. *Invisible work: Bilingualism, language choice and childrearing in inter-married families*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Park, S. M. & M. Sarkar. 2007. Parents' attitudes toward heritage language maintenance for their children and their efforts to help their children maintain the heritage language: A case study of Korean-Canadian immigrants. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 20(3). 223–235.
- Pease-Alvarez, L. 2003. Transforming perspectives on bilingual language socialization. In R. Bayley & S. Schecter (eds.), *Language socialization in bilingual and multilingual societies*, 9–24. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Schwartz, M. 2008. Exploring the relationship between family language policy and heritage language knowledge among second generation Russian-Jewish immigrants in Israel. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 29(5). 400–418.
- Schwartz, M., V. Moin, M. Leikin & A. Breitkopf. Forthcoming. Immigrants' family language policy toward children's preschool bilingual education: parents' perspective. *International Journal of Multilingualism*.
- Spolsky, B. 2004. *Language policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spolsky, B. 2007. Family language management: Some preliminaries. In A. Stavans & I. Kupferberg (eds.), *Studies in language and language education: Essays in honor of Elite Olshtain*, 429–449. Jerusalem: The Magnes press, Hebrew University.
- Spolsky, B. & E. Shohamy. 1999. *The languages of Israel: Policy, ideology and practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Tannenbaum, M.. 2003. The multifaceted aspects of language maintenance: A new measure for its assessment in immigrant families. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 6(5). 374–388.
- Tannenbaum, M. 2005. Viewing family relations through a linguistic lens: Symbolic aspects of language maintenance in immigrant families. *The Journal of Family Communication* 5(3). 229–252.
- Tannenbaum, M. & P. Howie. 2002. The association between language maintenance and family relations: Chinese immigrant children in Australia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 23(5). 408–424.
- Williams, G. 1987. Bilingualism, class dialect and social reproduction. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 66. 85–98.
- Wong Fillmore, L. 1991. When learning a second language means losing the first. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 6. 323–346.
- Wong Fillmore, L. 2000. Loss of family languages: Should educators be concerned? *Theory into Practice* 39(4). 203–210.
- Zhu, H. & W. Li. 2005. Bi- and multi-lingual acquisition. In M. Ball (ed.), *Clinical Sociolinguistics*, 165–179. Oxford: Blackwell.

Dr. Mila Schwartz <milasch@bgu.ac.il> completed her graduate her work at the University of Haifa in Learning Disabilities and Literacy Development among Bilingual and

Trilingual Children. She then continued her post-doctoral specialization at Ben-Gurion University and at the University of Haifa in the Edmond J. Safra Brain Research Center for the Study of Learning Disabilities. Today, her research interests include studying of bi-literacy; early bilingual education; language and cognitive development of early sequential bilinguals; family language policy; and immigrant teachers' pedagogical development.

