

Language Policy

Maarja Siiner · Francis M. Hult  
Tanja Kupisch *Editors*

# Language Policy and Language Acquisition Planning

 Springer

# Language Policy

Volume 15

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The last half century has witnessed an explosive shift in language diversity not unlike the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, but involving now a rapid spread of global languages and an associated threat to small languages. The diffusion of global languages, the stampede towards English, the counter-pressures in the form of ethnic efforts to reverse or slow the process, the continued determination of nation-states to assert national identity through language, and, in an opposite direction, the greater tolerance shown to multilingualism and the increasing concern for language rights, all these are working to make the study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning a field of swift growth.

The series will publish empirical studies of general language policy or of language education policy, or monographs dealing with the theory and general nature of the field. We welcome detailed accounts of language policy-making - who is involved, what is done, how it develops, why it is attempted. We will publish research dealing with the development of policy under different conditions and the effect of implementation. We will be interested in accounts of policy development by governments and governmental agencies, by large international companies, foundations, and organizations, as well as the efforts of groups attempting to resist or modify governmental policies. We will also consider empirical studies that are relevant to policy of a general nature, e.g. the local effects of the developing European policy of starting language teaching earlier, the numbers of hours of instruction needed to achieve competence, selection and training of language teachers, the language effects of the Internet. Other possible topics include the legal basis for language policy, the role of social identity in policy development, the influence of political ideology on language policy, the role of economic factors, policy as a reflection of social change.

The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and comparative educationalists.

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Editors

# Language Policy and Language Acquisition Planning

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# Situating Language Acquisition Planning



Maarja Siiner, Francis M. Hult, and Tanja Kupisch

**Abstract** The present chapter traces the development of language acquisition planning. It begins by considering the work of Robert L. Cooper, who placed language acquisition planning alongside corpus planning and status planning as a fundamental type of language planning. While corpus planning focuses on language form and status planning on language function, acquisition planning focuses on language users and how they acquire the communicative repertoires they need for access to opportunities in society. It is thus central to the management of language teaching and learning in both formal and informal settings. Contemporary issues in language planning and policy across contexts and levels of education are addressed. Language acquisition planning, it is argued, is multifaceted, involving a continuum of issues from the psychological to the societal. Research spanning this continuum is discussed, with attention to conceptual orientations and methodological approaches.

**Keywords** Globalization · Language acquisition · Language education · Language learning · Language planning · Language policy · Language teaching

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## 1 Language Acquisition Planning as a Research Field

The roots of language acquisition planning in the field of LPP (language policy and planning) can be traced to Cooper (1989), who argued that it was needed as a third pillar alongside status and corpus planning. When planning, he proposed, “is directed toward increasing the number of users—speakers, writers, listeners, or readers—then a separate analytic category for the focus of language planning seems to me to be justified” (Cooper, 1989, p. 33). Fundamentally, language acquisition planning “refers to organized efforts to promote the learning of language” (Cooper, 1989, p. 157), and language teaching and learning has come to be a core element of LPP research (e.g., Johnson, 2013; Menken & García, 2010). The papers collected in this volume were selected from those presented at the 2015 Bridging Language Acquisition and Language Policy symposium held in Lund, Sweden. Like the symposium, the aim of the present volume is to present contemporary conceptual and empirical perspectives on language planning related to language teaching and learning.

While corpus planning focuses on language form and status planning on language functions, acquisition planning focuses on language users and how they acquire the communicative repertoires they need for access to opportunities in society (Hornberger, 2006, p. 28; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 29). In practice, the reasons why languages are learned and used are multifaceted, making language planning through legislation and by institutional means a complex task (Cooper, 1989, p. 185). Language planning attempts during the twentieth century often faced challenges due to complex demographic and socioeconomic situations and the fact that linguistic culture was bound to emotionally powerful factors like religion and ethnic identity (Schiffman, 1996; Spolsky, 2012). A critical and socially situated line of language policy research gradually emerged from an awareness of this complexity and from documented planning instances where language policies contributed to, rather than reduced, social inequality (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

Many of these critical LPP investigations, often applying ethnographic methods, were carried out in educational contexts in different parts of the world (Canagarajah, 2005; Hornberger, 1989; King, 2001; Martin-Jones, 2011). These studies have shown that language education policies are not unquestioningly implemented but very often resisted, especially when centrally developed policies are not sensitive to locally varying sociolinguistic settings, beliefs, and language users’ needs. Ethnographic studies (e.g., McCarty, 2011) have also documented the kinds of multiple actors involved in language planning that Cooper (1989, p. 184) described: “writers, poets, linguists, language teachers, lexicographers, and translators, but also missionaries, soldiers, legislators, and administrators.”

Another important insight from critical LPP research relates to the different discursive values attached to monolingualism and multilingualism. For instance, elite bi-/multilingualism in high status or dominant state languages has been shown to be more readily supported than the learning or maintenance of minoritized languages (Gogolin, 1997; Hult & Hornberger, 2016; Laakso, Sarhimaa, Åkermark, & Toivanen, 2016). In addition, language acquisition planning has, both as a research

and as a political area, gone through several paradigmatic shifts from monolingual to more plurilingual views (Schjerve & Vetter, 2012), that is to say valuing the totality of an individual's integrated communicative repertoire rather than multiple monolingualism (e.g., García & Wei, 2014). Moreover, studies from different parts of the world (e.g., Ennaji, 2005; Moore, 2014; Pattanayak, 1990; Pavlenko, 2008; Zsiga, Boyer, & Kramer, 2014) have documented personal and community multilingualism as a normal state of affairs and monolingualism as a political construction. These studies demonstrate clearly the discursive nature of language acquisition planning: higher values for preferred languages are discursively and contextually constructed and indexed with a number of language-external societal and political factors.

Language acquisition planning work, then, has continued to evolve since Cooper (1989) proffered it as a core type of language planning. The contributions to this volume offer current perspectives on language acquisition planning, with the aim of providing the reader with insights from different parts of the world and a variety of sites for language learning and teaching. Some contributors critically analyse language planning as discursive practice, where the problem that language acquisition planning aims to solve is given by historical and political context—and where sometimes, in a changed sociopolitical situation, yesterday's solution may become tomorrow's problem (Mueller Gathercole, this volume). One example is changing views about multilingualism in the globalizing world of the twenty-first century, where bi-/multilingualism is increasingly understood as a cognitive, social and economic asset, while monolingualism in a state language is framed as a problem that language acquisition planning needs solve (Arfiandhani, this volume; Özörencik and Hromadová, this volume).

Moreover, as some of the contributors demonstrate (e.g., Holmen, this volume; Mueller Gathercole, this volume), multilingualism is a vague and contradictory term that is often used without acknowledgment of its inherent complexity. Multilingualism is related to wider socio-political and economic factors. Calculations based on the benefits of language skills can have an impact on language education policymaking. Developing language skills is an investment in one's human capital – an investment of personal resources in anticipation of future benefits (Hogan-Brun, 2017). Promoting multilingualism as a marketable resource can be hard to combine with promoting multilingualism as an issue of equality, democratic participation and fundamental human rights (Petrovic, 2005; Ricento, 2005; cf. Hult & Hornberger, 2016). For instance, in today's linguistic market, English is a resource one cannot afford not to have. The question is rather what other language resources one needs to have beside it. This is an especially salient theme in contemporary language acquisition planning, and one taken up by eight contributors to the volume who document and discuss the consequences of Englishization in different parts of the world.

The increased focus on English on all educational levels, and its ambiguous status in some contexts as neither a second nor a foreign language, is indicative of the discursive nature of language planning, which has to operate with central terms that are neither stable nor unambiguous (Cameron, 1990). Insights from language plan-

ning research can help language acquisition planners to be aware of the ambiguity of concepts like mother tongue or heritage, second, additional or foreign language (Laakso et al., 2016). These concepts are an expression of legal status relations between languages in a country at a given historical point that may change rather than an essence of a language itself (Cronin, 1995). Language hierarchies, or the linguistic order, change over time and as such are a result of changes in the political, legal, socioeconomic, demographic circumstances in a state or in a region (Hult & Pietikäinen, 2014).

What the contributions to this volume document is not a global and absolute linguistic order, but language acquisition planning within specific geographical and institutional settings. Although there are some common traits like the importance of developing English competences on all educational levels, and especially in higher education, the local and contextual reactions to them are different from country to country (Holmen, this volume, Nukuto, this volume) and sometimes even within the same institution (Falck Rønne, this volume), where English can be framed as a necessary tool or as a killer language. We can also see from the contributions that even though LPP research increasingly shows the agentive role of actors in a variety of sites, such as families (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008), educational institutions are still important sites for language acquisition planning. There remains a need for institutional investigations due to their social and political importance. They may serve an important function in ideological reproduction, but in current times of decentralization, institutions are also sites for recontextualization of societal language planning goals (see, for example, Hult & Källkvist, 2016).

## 2 Contributions to This Volume

The volume is divided into three thematic parts. The two first parts document language acquisition planning in informal and formal educational settings from elementary to higher education. The different case studies map the agents, resources and attitudes needed for creating moments and spaces for language learning, which may at times collide with wider ideologies and policies that try to promote learning of some rather than other languages (Liu, this volume). Furthermore, while language acquisition at the pre-school and primary school level is often about language socialization and the preservation of multilingualism in families or geographical areas, higher education is increasingly focused on learning languages to enhancing one's competences and value on the global labour market. In this context, the question is increasingly: Is English enough in the globalising world? In Part III, researchers take up some epistemological and conceptual challenges for language acquisition planning that suggest a politicization of the field and a need for further critical scrutiny.

The chapters in the first part link language practices, ideologies and management on various scales (e.g., sub-state, governmental, institutional, and individual) (Hult, 2017). While most authors concentrate on school practices, there are also studies

focusing on home practices (Liu) or including them (Neves). Chapters in the first part have in common that they are concerned with policies that promote language learning among young children, during early language development (age 0–3) (Liu; Caporal-Ebershold), during primary school (Arfiandhani and Zein; Özörencik and Hromadová; Neves) and secondary education (Müller and Walqui). The relations explored are manifold. Some focus on parents' beliefs or practices (Liu), some explore the relation between state policies and the values of policymakers or parents (Özörencik and Hromadová) or those of institutions (Caporal-Ebershold). Others address what policy makers believe vis-à-vis findings from SLA research (Arfiandhani), or the relation between policies vis-à-vis teachers' knowledge about language learning (Mueller and Walqui). Some papers are based on ethnographic studies (Caporal-Ebersold; Nukuto; Holmen; Liu; Falck Rønne) while others focus more on the epistemological basis of language acquisition planning as a research field (Arfiandhani; Mueller and Walqui). The focal topics include foreign language acquisition (Arfiandhani and Zein; Caporal-Ebershold; Holmen; Mueller and Walqui) and heritage language maintenance (Liu; Özörencik and Hromadová) or combinations thereof (Neves), thus not being restricted to English.

In her contribution, *"It is just natural": A Critical Case Study of Family Language Policy in a 1.5 Generation Chinese Immigrant Family on the West Coast of the United States*, Lu Liu investigates the family language policies (FLP) of a Chinese immigrant family on the West Coast of the United States. More specifically, she documents what parents do to contribute to the maintenance of the heritage language (Mandarin Chinese) within the family, i.e., when and how the two Mandarin-speaking parents and the Chinese babysitter interact with their 2-year-old child. The study is ethnographic in nature, based on observations and interviews in Chinese and English. It illustrates how immigrant families strive to maintain heritage languages – the languages of their home culture and emotions—in the context of debates about which languages benefit their child's social, cognitive and emotional development that are influenced by broader, societal discourses underlying the importance of English.

In their paper, *Between Implementing and Creating: Mothers of Children with Plurilingual Family Background and the Czech Republic's Language Acquisition Policy*, Helena Özörencik and Magdalena Antonia Hromadová analyse the discursive resources and narrative strategies of mothers in multilingual families in Prague. While the Czech Republic is a country with a predominantly monolingual self-perception, the transnational families in this study represent a diversity of linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, including, e.g., English, Greek, Serbian, Slovak, Spanish, and Turkish. The point is made that although the mothers' narratives reproduce the monolingual self-perception of Czech society, some of the transnational mothers challenge the role of mere "implementers" through their narratives. When constructing something that does not comply with institutionally expected patterns, they use special narrative strategies, such as argumentation and justification, suggesting that they do not simply conform to their roles of passive implementers of policy. Instead, they design their own policies by actively reinventing their roles and developing their own attitudes towards the language policy imposed by the state.

In *Language Policy in a Multilingual Crèche in France: How is Language Policy Linked to Language Acquisition Beliefs?*, Eloise Caporal-Ebersold studies language policies in early childhood education (age 0–3), focusing on an English-French bilingual crèche—a French-type of childcare institution with a long tradition—in Strasbourg. The focus lies in the declared language policy as compared to the practiced and the perceived language policy of the crèche. While the crèche officially declares a One Professional – One Language (OPOL) policy, the investigation shows that the implicit language choices of the parents and professionals in this setting are determined by their personal beliefs about language acquisition. It is true that OPOL is a widely used and accepted strategy with a long tradition that simplifies the perceived-to-be-complicated multilingual reality, but it is hard to put it into practice in everyday situations at the crèche. More generally, the paper illustrates that even if early child education structures are different from school, language ideologies are pervasive.

Puput Arfiandhani and Subhan Zein (*Utilizing SLA Findings to Inform Language-in-education Policy: The Case of Early English Instruction in Indonesia*) examine a common mantra in the politics of language education: the earlier language learning begins, the better. It is a recurring theme in educational policy in many parts of the world. Here, Arfiandhani and Zein focus on the context of Indonesia, drawing upon empirical work that reveals the ways locally situated beliefs about language have shaped language education in lower grades. They situate their interpretation of findings about the Indonesian context in light of the vast body of second language acquisition research that explores the effects of age on language learning. In all, they argue that future Indonesian language education policy should take into account the sociopolitically situated needs of students in Indonesia while drawing on SLA principles to chart a curricular course for lifelong second language development.

In her paper, *Portuguese as an Additional Language: Domains Use among Young Learners*, Ana Cristina Neves is concerned with Portuguese in formal education at primary schools. The target population resides in three different countries where Portuguese is learned as an additional language: Cape Verde, Switzerland and Macao (China). The findings show three different models based on the three domains of language use: In the Cape Verde Islands, where Portuguese is a second language, it is mainly restricted to the school domain, i.e., the school principal and the teachers. In Switzerland, where Portuguese is a heritage language, it is mainly used with elder generations of their home country and partially in the classroom with the Portuguese teacher. In Macao, where Portuguese is a foreign language, its use is limited to classroom interactions with the teacher and while doing homework for Portuguese as a school subject. By painting three different and context-specific dimensions of the term *additional language*, the author shows that the domains of language use are not necessarily directly related to what is prescribed at the macro-level of language policy-making.

Peggy Mueller and Aida Walqui (*Language Education Policy and Practice in the U.S.: Emerging Efforts to Expand All Teachers' Understanding about Language Development and Learning*) document an ongoing project in a major urban area in the United States of America, which has the goal of strengthening



professional development and language and literacy education practices in American schools. The project brought together a regional group of university educators, professional developers, and school district leaders to identify their practices, experience and knowledge in the context of English as an L2. The project is situated in the Chicago area in whose public schools ELLs typically comprise nearly a fifth of the district's total enrolment and where, nonetheless, most teachers remain largely unprepared to support ELLs' development. Participating university and district leaders in the Chicago project were invited to reflect on their experiences and the theories informing their own practice with the ultimate goal of supporting the development of new policy and practice solutions that support English language learners. The paper concludes with a reflection on preliminary impact and implications for policy emerging from this work.

In the second part of the book, the case studies investigate language acquisition and language planning within higher education. Internationalization has for a long time meant "English is enough", meaning cutting down teaching resources in other larger languages like French and German. The University of Copenhagen in Denmark has launched a language strategy *More Languages for More Students*, funding courses in other study-relevant languages. However, such an investment needs to be grounded in careful needs analyses at universities, including both students' and instructors' needs, in order to decide which languages and language skills to include in the actual language acquisition planning. Holmen offers a rationale for this in her chapter (*Shaping a Danish Multilingual University's Language Policy: Gatekeepers and Drivers of Change*), based on a language-in-education perspective. In her analysis she focuses on the different organizational levels involved when developing and implementing a new language strategy and the possible alignments and mismatches between these levels.

Camilla Falck Rønne (*Language Policy in Reality – A Study of Language Use in Two English-Taught Courses at University of Copenhagen*) investigates the direct consequences of internationalization for classroom interaction at the same institution. She mapped language use and attitudes in two courses taught in English. Her study reveals that the participants choose language based on communicative efficiency rather than language policy and that this causes an asymmetry. One group of students, the native Danish speakers, use English and Danish socially and professionally while the international students only have English at their disposal, creating an invisible wall for socialization and calling for additional tools for better inclusion. Rønne's work belongs to the growing body of research on the social isolation of international or exchange students, calling into question student mobility as a way to enhance one's language and cultural skills.

In their paper, *Washback Effects of the Science without Borders, English without Borders and Language without Borders Programs in Brazilian Language Policies and Rights*, Kyria Finardi and Renata Archanjo offer a critical analysis of the effects of the governmentally funded internationalization program Science without Borders in Brazil and its offshoot, English without Borders. The authors note that changes in educational policy also influence language acquisition policies but that link is not widely recognised nor is the need to address multilingualism in those programs. Hirokazu Nukuto, in turn, analysed language practices and attitudes in



the increasingly popular TESOL classroom in Japan (*Globalization, Foreign Language Acquisition Planning and Classroom Practice: A Case Study of Multinational Group Interaction in a Japanese University English Course*). The classes are part of internationalization processes at the Japanese universities, aiming at attracting students from other universities and at preparing Japanese students for globalization. However, what the students reported was that globalization for them was present in a different and openly engaging teaching and communication style practiced by the American teaching assistant. Nukuto's findings also point to a number of challenges faced by lecturers who have to teach in English but do not have English as their L1, which supports findings from other studies (Airey, 2011; Hellekjær, 2009). The list includes the lack of nuance (both lexical and grammatical) and precision, reduced ability to draw on humour, storytelling and cultural examples to make connections in teaching, as well as increased work-load.

The final part of the book turns to critical reflection about language acquisition planning as a field of research and public policy. Language acquisition planning has long been recognized as a multidimensional phenomenon (Cooper, 1989). The scope of factors that relate to educational LPP may include, *inter alia*, ethnic or racial power relations, historically situated political systems, language ideologies, community language socialization, relationships among stakeholders in communities and schools (e.g., students, parents, teachers, and administrators), interpersonal interaction, and intrapersonal development (both social and cognitive). In *Resonances: Second Language Development and Language Planning and Policy from a Complexity Theory Perspective*, Diane Larsen-Freeman explores the potential for complexity theory to account for how such multiple factors intersect in language education. She begins by presenting fundamental principles of complexity theory and goes on to review how they have been used to understand the dynamic nature of second language learning. Then, drawing upon work in LPP that also aligns with complexity theory, she makes a case for how it is well suited to serve as a conceptual bridge between the field of SLA and LPP in ways that can benefit language acquisition planning.

Integration is a key issue for countries that experience a substantial degree of migration, and thus it is increasingly a key factor in contemporary language acquisition planning. European policy, in particular, is known for pluralistic aspirations that often face implementational challenges. In their paper, *Inclusion in Education: Challenges for Linguistic Policy and Research*, Mark Fettes and Mahbod Karamouzian take up the concept of inclusion in educational settings. They unpack different ways of theorizing inclusion and go on to explore how foundations of language policy and planning in conjunction with principles of second language acquisition can inform the management of linguistic diversity in light of policy objectives for inclusive education. In the final chapter of the book (*Language Development in Bilingual Children: Fact, Factoid and Fiction*), Virginia Mueller Gathercole examines a range of factors that shape the development of language among bilingual children. Evidence-based practice in education, speech and language therapy, and language policy, she argues, need to be based on a thorough understanding of how these factors work together to determine the patterns of language development and use observed in bilingual children and adults.

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**Part I**  
**Basic and Secondary Education**

# “It’s Just Natural”: A Critical Case Study of Family Language Policy in a 1.5 Generation Chinese Immigrant Family on the West Coast of the United States



Lu Liu

**Abstract** The fast-growing immigrant population in the U.S. and the educational and linguistic characteristics of immigrant families have aroused a keen interest in the growing field of family language policy (FLP), the study of explicit and implicit planning of language use within family homes. Research shows that these informal language planning activities and processes have a profound impact on children’s cognitive development, racial and ethnic identity construction, and academic trajectories. With a particular interest in Chinese immigrant families, this study takes a close ethnographic look at the family language policies that inform the daily language practices of a 1.5 generation Chinese immigrant family on the West Coast of the United States. The study is guided theoretically by Spolsky’s three-component framework of language policy comprised of language practices, language ideology and language management. Findings indicate that the parents’ ideologies about their heritage language greatly impacts the family language policies expressed as a “natural” desire to use Mandarin Chinese at home for maintaining their racial and ethnic identity. This study fills a void in the educational linguistics scholarship, bridging the emergent field of FLP and language acquisition. It also contributes to FLP as a field of sociocultural practice, illuminating how immigrant families maintain heritage languages and ethnolinguistic identities and how these home language practices benefit their children’s social, cognitive and emotional development.

**Keywords** Family language policy · Language ideology · Language maintenance · Chinese immigrant families

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## 1 Introduction

Due to the fast-growing immigrant population in the United States, the educational and linguistic characteristics of immigrant families arouse a keen interest in the study of family language practices (Bernier-Grand, 2009; King & Fogle, 2006; King & Logan-Terry, 2008; Kouritzin, 2000; Martínez-Roldán & Malavé, 2004; Quiroz, Snow, & Zhao, 2010). Research shows that parents' beliefs and attitudes towards language to a large extent determine children's language development and outcomes (De Houwer, 1999; King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008). Family language policy (FLP), therefore, has become an emerging area of study in recent years especially in the field of education policy and sociolinguistics. FLP brings together research on child language acquisition, bilingualism and multilingualism, applied linguistics, language policy, anthropology, and cultural studies (Johnson, 2013; King & Fogle, 2013; King et al., 2008; McCarty, 2011; Spolsky, 2004).

With a focus on Chinese immigrant families, the purpose of this study is to better understand the family language policies that inform the daily language practices of a 1.5 generation Chinese immigrant family on the West Coast of the United States, and illuminates the tensions and challenges in this family's language policy implementation. Using an ethnographic lens, my goals are to illuminate awareness about these families' heritage language maintenance, and to address a gap in literature about the implicit, covert and unexpressed impact of Western language ideologies (Dorian, 1998; Grillo, 1989) on language practice and planning in the U.S. As Dorian (1998) notes, Western European ideologies of contempt for bilingualism have had profound and lingering consequences for heritage language maintenance in the U.S.

The following questions guided this study on FLP:

1. What does FLP look like in this 1.5 generation Chinese immigrant family living on the West Coast of the United States?
2. What are the challenges in their family language practices?
3. How do the 1.5 generation immigrant parents perceive their mother language?

By answering these questions, the study sought to address the role of Chinese immigrant parents' language ideologies. As the data show, the parents' perception and beliefs about their mother tongue crucially impact their home language policy, including which language their child should use in everyday interactions, and long-term decisions about maintaining their heritage language. On a broader scale, this study suggests that these everyday language choices among family members greatly affect their children, who are born and raised in a dominant Western language ideological environment, including their language acquisition, and their social, cognitive and emotional development.

## 2 Theoretical Perspectives

The scholarship on FLP serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. In order to contextualize the theory and the research, I begin with the macro-level theory of language policy, funneling into the micro-level of family language policy.

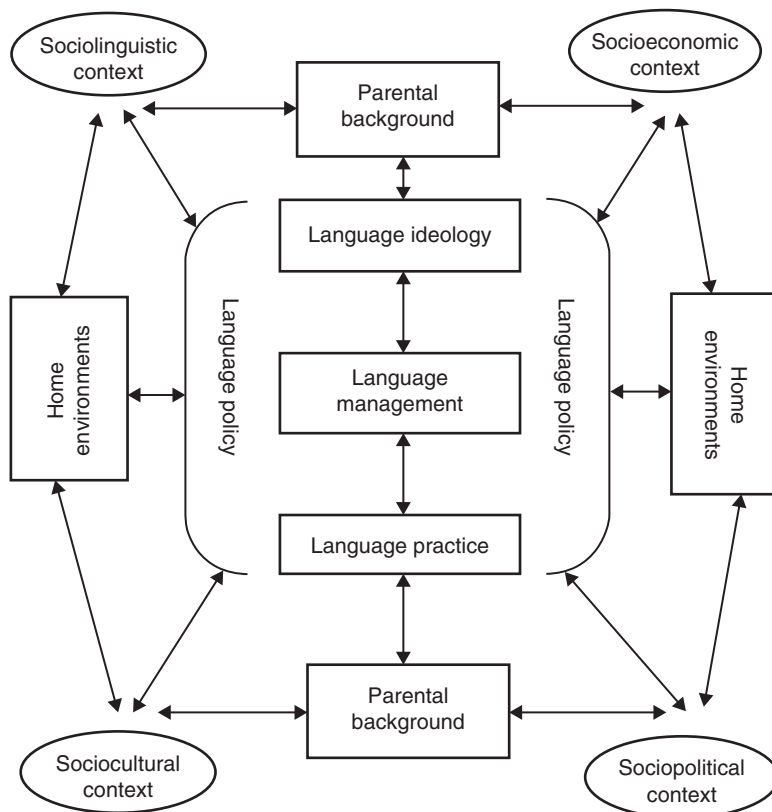
### 2.1 *Language Policy*

The study of language policy is often referred to as language planning and policy (LPP) (Johnson, 2013; McCarty, 2011). According to Spolsky (2004), the language policy of a speech community has three components: language practices, language beliefs or ideology, and language intervention, planning or management. Language practices refer to “the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire” (Spolsky, 2004, p. 5), that is, what people do with language. Language ideology is the “beliefs about language and language use” (p. 5)—what people think about language. The third component of language policy includes “any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management” (p. 5)—what people try to do with language (King et al., 2008). Different from other notions of language policy grounded in culture, beliefs and ideologies (Schiffman, 1996), Spolsky argues that such beliefs and ideologies *are* language policy, and language practices are “as language policy *in and of themselves*” (Johnson, 2013, p. 6).

From an ethnographic perspective, McCarty (2011) defines language policy “as a complex sociocultural process” constituted by “cultural phenomena socially, historically, and comparatively across time and space” (pp. 8, 10). She also argues that, from a critical perspective, language policy, both implicit and explicit, regulates language use and these “everyday ideologically saturated language-regulating mechanisms construct social hierarchies” (McCarty, Collins, & Hopson, 2011, p. 339). In other words, language policy can be characterized as “modes of human interaction, negotiation, and production mediated by relations of power” (McCarty, 2004, p. 72).

### 2.2 *Family Language Policy*

Language policy as a field of study has a tradition of focusing on public and institutional contexts and has been examined at the level of the state, school or workplace. However, there has been little attention to the private and intimate context of the home and family. Since parents’ beliefs of language can largely impact on children’s language outcomes through the application, realization, and negotiation of family language policy in both the short and long run, FLP becomes crucial in children’s language acquisition, ideologies, as well as their identity formation (King et al., 2008).



**Fig. 1** Conceptualization of family language policy (Curdt-Christiansen, 2014, p. 37)

Defined as “explicit and overt planning in relation to language use” (King et al., 2008, p. 907), FLP as a field of study explores how parents choose to use and teach a language to their children, and how their language ideologies shape the children’s language practice in the home environment (Curdt-Christiansen, 2014; King & Fogle, 2006; King et al., 2008). Within the family domain, parents’ beliefs about language affect what home language(s) they choose to use and how they make this choice (Spolsky, 2009). Furthermore, the political, economic, cultural and sociolinguistic ecology inside and outside the home also greatly influence these language choices and how languages are transmitted across generations, maintained or lost (Fishman, 2004) (See Fig. 1). As Curdt-Christiansen (2013) argues,

(T)he study of FLP can make visible the relationships between private domains and public spheres and reveal the conflicts that family members must negotiate between the realities of social pressure, political impositions, and public education demands on the one hand, and the desire for cultural loyalty and linguistic continuity on the other. (p. 1)

In recent years, FLP studies have been conducted in Singapore, Scotland, England, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Australia and Canada, with special focus on how bilingual education at home benefits the children in providing more



socioeconomic opportunities later in life (Curdt-Christiansen, 2014; Kopeliovich, 2010; Schwartz & Moin, 2011). Those studies supported bilingual or multilingual family language policy because bi/multilingualism is a crucial skillset to open up job opportunities, and therefore socioeconomic status enhancement. For overtly bilingual or multilingual language policy and practice within the home, the socioeconomic benefits are explicit and distinct. However, underneath these policies, it is easy to ignore the tacit, “taken-for-granted” assumptions about language attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors which “contribute to linguistic and social inequality” (McCarty, 2011, p. 10). In addition, the maintenance of immigrants’ mother tongue is also an essential means to construct one’s racial and ethnic identity within a multicultural context. Therefore, in this study I focus on how these “commonsense” naturalized language ideologies affect parents’ implementation of an explicit family language policy as well as their children’s racial and ethnic identity construction.

### 3 Research Context and Methods

The setting for this study is the West Coast of the United States in which several metropolitan cities are located. A large Chinese immigrant population, who have built up their own cultural, religious and ethnic communities, resides in this area. The family describe themselves as Christian Chinese Americans. The mother (M) was born in China and immigrated to the US with her parents when she was 15 years old. She is a full-time PhD student. The father (F) was also born in China. He went to graduate school in China and came to the U.S. for his doctoral studies. He works in a financial company on the West Coast. The babysitter (B) was born in China and came to the U.S. as a college student when she was 22. She is finishing her undergraduate study in a university on the West Coast. The child (C) was born and raised on the West Coast. He is two years old and goes to an English-only daycare center in the community.

In this study, I am an insider as Chinese and an outsider as an ethnographer. As a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese, I am aware of positioning myself as a bilingual person shifting in bicultural contexts and become interested in language ideology and language identity of Chinese immigrants. As an insider, I understand their cultural traditions, language, and beliefs. As an outsider, I apply the scholarly knowledge to the field and approach it from a scientifically oriented perspective. In 2015, I was given rare access to the most intimate FLP domains and conducted the field work with this family for 10 months. This included three extended participant observations recorded by field notes and audiotape: a video watching activity, mealtime (dinner), and the baby’s bathing and bedtime storytelling; four phenomenological in-depth interviews with the mother, father, and babysitter, and a small “focus group” interview with the parents. All the participants are fluent in both English and Mandarin Chinese. In this case, the family speaks the official language, Mandarin Chinese, which is used interchangeably with Chinese. The interviews were conducted mainly in English with some Chinese. Following Seidman’s (2013) three-

part interview protocol, the interviews consisted of the participants' focused life history, the details of their experience, and their reflection on meaning. Following Saldaña's (2012) and Bazeley's (2013) coding and categorizing strategies for analyzing data, it shows that there are no discrepancies between what the parents shared in the interviews and what I found through observation.

## 4 Data Analysis

I illuminated the language policies of this family based on Spolsky's (2004) three-component framework of language policy. These components are "interrelated but independently describable" (Spolsky, 2009, p. 4). But the nature and constitution of language policy can be understood by categorizing its key parts.

### 4.1 Language Practices

Language practices provide the linguistic context for language acquisition, and refer to "the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up [a speech community's] linguistic repertoire" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 5). In a family context, language practices are the routine, observable behaviors which parents deploy to facilitate their child's language acquisition. From my observations of the focal family's daily interactions and activities, the parents used six distinct types of instruction to help their child with his language learning on a daily basis within the home: indexing, correcting, modeling, imitating, ordering, and narrating.

**Indexing** Indexing refers to the parents explicitly teaching their child Mandarin Chinese words by pointing to corresponding objects. For instance, during the dinner, M was trying to teach C the vocabulary of the food that they were eating:

M: “西—兰—花—” (Bro—cco—li—) [pointing to the broccolis in C's plate and pronounced the word character by character.]

C: “嗯——” (Um—)

M: “蘑—菇。” (Mush—room) [pointing to the food in C's plate.]<sup>1</sup>

In this scenario, M tried to teach C the words, “broccoli” and “mushroom”, the food on C's plate. She captured a good opportunity to teach these words when they were having dinner because mealtime creates a context for the word's use, and provides an opportunity for C to better understand the word through the action of eating the broccoli and the mushroom. We cannot see the learning outcome immediately,

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<sup>1</sup>The words within double quotation marks are the original data in Chinese; the words within parentheses are English translation; the words in square brackets are body movements from observations.

since C only responded with an “um”, indicating a positive acceptance of this indexing. However, after indexing and pronouncing the words, M contextualized the words through embodied instruction. Therefore, indexing in this case involved not simply pointing to an object, but a means of instruction in a socially mediated situation. As Garrett and Baquedano-López (2002) comment:

[Y]oung children and other novices, through interactions with older and/or more experienced persons, acquire the knowledge and practices that are necessary for them to function as, and be regarded as, competent members of their communities (p. 341).

This process is defined as language socialization (Spolsky, 2009).

**Correcting** Correcting involves parents consciously amending the errors of the child’s misuse of grammar, lexicon, or phonology in their daily communication. For example, during dinnertime, C sniffed his nose several times, having caught a cold. M helped C clean up his nose. By looking at the dirty paper towel, C said:

C: “鼻—” (Nose—) [pointing to the dirty paper towel.]

M: “鼻涕—” (Snot—)

C: “木木—” (C—C—) [pointing to his nose.]

M: “木木的鼻涕。” (C’s snot.)

In this example, M corrected C’s misuse of the word “nose” when she saw that C was pointing to the snot in the dirty towel he just used. C responded by pointing to his nose and called his name. This might indicate that C did not understand M’s correction of the word for the signified, but repeated it by pointing his nose, the signifier in his mind. M explained the concept of the signified again by using a format tying, C’s name, and intensified the lexicon “snot” a second time.

**Modeling** Here, the parents use an exemplary person or thing as an example to teach C language and literature in Mandarin as well as forming good habits. For example, M and F chose “巧虎” (Talented Tiger) as a model for C to learn from:

M: Somebody told us about this program. They said, ‘巧虎 (Talented Tiger) is so great! My son and my daughter pretty much learn how to speak Chinese by watching 巧虎 (Talented Tiger).’ So we watched an episode. It was really good because it covers not only songs and actions but also ‘唐诗’, the poems from the Tang Dynasty. And they do all the motions. So we thought it was a good Chinese education program for the kids. C gets really happy when he watches it. He will dance to it.

F: When we try to ask him to brush his teeth, we’ll say巧虎 (Talented Tiger) is doing it. So it’s like a role model for him.

M: Yes, it’s not only language. They teach the habits, like go to sleep; poop in your potty; brush your teeth; wash your hands; don’t push or slap others. All these things for kids.

F and M purposefully selected “巧虎” (Talented Tiger) for C to learn not only Mandarin itself, but also the classic poems from the Tang Dynasty, considered the crown of literature in Chinese history in the 7th to tenth century CE. This adds solid

cultural meanings to the study of grammar, lexicon and syntax for daily communication. Moreover, “巧虎” (Talented Tiger) is a role model for C in terms of forming good habits on a daily basis.

**Imitating** Here, parents ask the child to imitate the letters, words or sentences they teach him. For instance, when M was washing C’s hair during the bath, C struggled to avoid the foam. M tried to teach C English letters to attract his attention:

M: “Say A!”

C: “A!”

M: “B!”

C: “B!”

M: “C!” [Smiling]

C: “C!” [Laughing]

Imitation is one of the basic methods of teaching and learning a new language. However, in this situation, instead of telling C to imitate what she said, M took the opportunity to teach C English letters in a vibrant and lively scenario of bathing, when people usually sing or whistle. Thus it made the imitation less boring and tedious.

**Ordering** In this process, parents give the child explicit instructions of what to do in Mandarin Chinese. When F talked about how he facilitated C’s practices for Mandarin learning at home, he said,

One thing we train him to do is to pick up something, like paper, and ask him to put it in the garbage can. Or we ask him to mimic animals just as a pure play with him. We also ask him to dance together and try to encourage him to sing a song although he is still not getting into it yet.

This shows that F consciously trained C with explicit orders and instructions in Mandarin. Meanwhile, he also helped C accomplish a certain level of socialization within the home in different activities, such as singing, dancing, and mimicking.

**Narrating** This includes both the impromptu storytelling by the parents in any circumstance where the child encounters something of interest, as well as the bedtime storytelling as a daily routine.

*Impromptu Storytelling* During the dinner, when C pointed to an item in his plate and pronounced the word in Mandarin Chinese, M tried to tell impromptu stories and create a context for C to memorize the vocabulary. When C looked at his plate he said,

C: “蘑菇!” (Mushroom!) [Picking up a mushroom in the hot dumpling soup from his plate.]

M: “蘑菇在泡温泉!” (The mushroom is taking a hot spa!) [Nodding to C.]

C: “蘑菇!” (Mushroom!) [Raising his voice.]

M: “它们都泡过温泉了。它们都好了。再泡皮都要泡掉了。” (They’ve also taken a hot spa. They feel fine now. Their skin will all be peeled off if you dip

them in the spa any longer.) [Trying to stop C from playing around with the mushrooms in the soup.]

M: “这些不泡。西兰花说, ‘我们不喜欢泡温泉!’” (These are not supposed be dipped much in the soup. Broccolis say, ‘we don’t like the hot spa’!) [Pointing to the broccolis.]

M: “这些已经泡过啦。它们泡完温泉啦,出去晒晒太阳!” (They’ve already taken a hot spa. Since they’ve finished, they need to come out and get some suntan.) [Pointing to the mushrooms.]

In this excerpt, M was trying create a scenario and making analogies for mushrooms who were having a hot spa and getting suntan versus broccolis not being into the hot spa. She also animated her voices as different characters with changing intonations and pitches. M generated these type of impromptu stories as something occurred at a moment, when she could utilize it as a fully contextualized situation for teaching and practicing C’s literacy. Moreover, beyond teaching C the vocabularies of certain objects, M was also telling C the “nature” of food by simple plotted impromptu stories. For instance, mushrooms can be cooked in the hot dumpling soup whereas broccolis are not supposed to be dipped in the soup.

Another instance is when M finished C’s bath at night and pulled up the stopper of the bathtub, C said,

C: “洞!” (Hole!)

M: “水通过洞去找他们的爸爸妈妈了。” (The water is going to find their mom and dad through this hole.)

After taking the bath, M released the water in the bathtub. C saw this as “losing” the water and looked quite sad and disappointed. M used this opportunity to create a scenario for C to understand that the waters went to a place where they belong to, and reunion with “their mom and dad”, just as C did every day after coming back home from daycare. In this way, M told C a simple truth of a daily routine as well as comforting his disappointment of losing the water. M tied this impromptu situation to C’s familiar life experience which was easier for him to perceive. She also used the same strategy in the bedtime Bible storytelling.

*Bedtime Bible Storytelling* Bedtime storytelling is a daily ritual in this family. The day I visited their home, F, M and the babysitter (B) first gave the child a bath, then put him in his bed and sang a Christian song for him in Chinese, *My Help Cometh from the Lord*. After that, the parents told a Bible story of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. When the storytelling was accomplished, the father gave a prayer.

Firstly, F and M were trying to get this activity started:

F: “好, 现在我们开始讲圣经故事。(Okay, now let’s start the Bible storytelling.)” [M took out a picture book of the Bible story.]

C: “Bi—Ba—Bi—Ba—” [pointing to the book.]

B: “Bible.” [Correcting C.]

C: “Bi—Ba—” C repeated.

B: “Bible 变成 Bi—Ba 啦? (The Bible becomes Bi—Ba?)”

F&M: “不是,他在圣经上找Bi—Ba—。我们不知道是什么东西。(No. He is looking for ‘Bi—Ba—’ in the Bible. But we don’t know what it is.)”

In this sequence, when F initiated the storytelling routine with an explicit instruction, “Let’s start the Bible storytelling”, M responded to F’s order by a non-vocal action, pulling out the children’s picture book of Bible stories, a mediated tool for helping accomplish a turn in an interaction. C seems to know this daily routine, and understand that an object “Bi—Ba” could be found in this particular picture book. However, B did not know “Bi—Ba” was an object in C’s mind. She was trying to correct C for his mispronunciation of the word “Bible” as an immediate response. C took the turn and responded to B with a repetition of “Bi—Ba”, clarifying the concept of this particular item he was looking for. In the third turn, B looked very confused and turned to F and M, wondering if C actually mispronounced the word “Bible”. F and M both responded at the same, showing their understanding of B’s concern. But from their previous experiences, though not shown in this sequence, F and M indicated that C had been looking for this object “Bi—Ba” in the Bible picture book for a while. Yet they couldn’t figure out what it is.

Then, M started telling a story of Nehemiah in the Bible:

M: “你看这是什么地方,怎么那么破烂啊?蜘蛛掉下来了,墙也破了,柱子也破了,花也谢了,罐子也破了,碗也破了,花瓶也破了,啊!这是什么地方?这是什么地方?这是神的圣殿!这竟然是神的圣殿! (Look, what is this place? Why is so shabby? The spider is hanging from the ceiling. The wall is damaged. The pillar is peeling off. The flowers are withering. The pot is broken. The bowl is broken too. The vase cracked. AW! WHAT is this place? What is THIS place? THIS is God’s palace. This turns out to be GOD’s PALACE!)”

C: “盘! (Plate!)” [Pointing to the picture book.]

M: “盘,破啦。花瓶,(The plate, is broken. The vase,)”

F & M: “破啦! [(Is) broken!]”

F: “蜘蛛掉下来了! (The spider is hanging from the ceiling.)”

In order to attract C’s attention, M depicted a scenery where everything was shabby and broken. By mentioning several items appeared in the picture, a spider, walls, a pillar, flowers, a pot, a bowl, and a vase, C pointed to a plate that M did not mention. This indicated that C was following M’s vocal expression and matching them with the mediated too, the picture book. Once he found that a plate was not mentioned, he pointed it out immediately. Therefore a turn of interaction was accomplished though it seems that C did not respond to M’s description of the place directly. M responded to C by the same pattern, “The plate is broken.” When she repeated the vase she mentioned in the first turn, F joined in, and said with M at the same time “is broken.” After that, F added another reinforcement, “The spider is hanging from the ceiling”, which was also mentioned in the first turn.

In this excerpt, M tried to connect this story with C,

- F: “然后他们把城墙像堆积木一样的堆起来。一块一块的,堆的好高好漂亮。你看他们堆的多好呀。(Then they rebuild the wall like building the blocks. One block after another. Very tall and very beautiful. You see, they’ve done a great job!)”
- M: “和山木堆的一样好。(As beautifully as C does for his blocks.)”
- F: “哇哦。他们堆的真漂亮。(Wow. They did a wonderful job.)”
- M: “于是在上帝的帮助下,尼希米叔叔就像山木搭积木一样,把城墙给盖好了。(Then, with the help of God, Uncle Nehemiah rebuilds the wall just as C builds his blocks. They rebuild the wall.)”

In this sequence, it was the collaboration between F and M who finally accomplished the storytelling activity. C was silent and did not respond. With F’s leading of the story, M took turns and connected Nehemiah’s rebuilding the Jerusalem walls with C’s building his blocks (especially when they realized that C’s “Bi-Ba” refers to blocks, not shown in the excerpt). She emphasized the word “block” twice, and made the connection of the identifier and the identified visible by pointing the blocks in the picture (which C considered as “Bi—Ba”) and reinforced the word “block”. At the same time, in order for C to remember the word, she connected the activity of Nehemiah’s rebuilding walls with C’s playing the blocks. Here, she achieved the language teaching by contextualization and socialization.

In this excerpt, F conducted a prayer after the storytelling. He tried to connect this story and the prayer with C,

“阿爸天父我们感谢你,谢谢你的珍视。虽然有时我们犯罪,你管教我们,但是你们仍然有怜悯。谢谢你能够让尼希米大发热心,能够为你建造城墙并且你自己也赐福他们的工作,因为他爱你。求你祝福我们家的山木宝宝,也能够像尼希米一样能够大发热心,能够在他一生所行的事上,能够帮助他,让他也能在神的国度里,为你做成大事。求你宽宥这孩子,祝福这孩子,让他在每天的生活当中健康成长,给他平安,也赐给他智慧,帮助他,让他在神的话语中,做一个听话、幸福的孩子。也求您给他敬畏您的心,祝福他的身体,也医治他,今天能够好好的休息、睡觉,身体得到康复,感谢你!奉神的名义。(Abba Father, we thank you. Thank you for your cherishing. Although sometimes we sin, you discipline us, and you still have mercy. Thank you for giving Nehemiah great zeal for rebuilding the wall and blessing their work because he loves you. Oh Lord, Bless our family and our baby C, and let him become zealous Nehemiah. Please help him in his lifetime with accomplishment of great things in the holy realm of God. I pray thee forgiveness of this child, bless this child, and let him be healthy among every day of his life; Also give him peace. Let him be an obedient and happy child in the Word of God. Please also give him holy awe of God. Bless his health, and heal his sickness. Bless him a good rest, a good sleep and the physical rehabilitation. Thank you God. In Jesus Christ’s name we pray.)”

This is F’s prayer in the form of a monologue following the interactive storytelling activity. Besides praying for C’s health, F also tried to connect Nehemiah’s story of helping God rebuild the Jerusalem walls. He wanted C to learn from Nehemiah and become zealous in loving God. Praying is another daily ritual in this family, and F’s prayer echoed the day’s bedtime storytelling which wrapped up the day for the child perfectly with his and his family’s hope for C in the future.

In this particular situation of bedtime storytelling, the parents let the child direct several sequences of interactions. The child is not solely a listener or recipient of the parents’ instruction; he is also an active participant. Nor are the parents solely



speakers or language “managers.” They are on equal status with the child, facilitating the child’s socialization and language learning, though it is regarded as common sense that the parents and caregivers have the authority to manage that learning (Spolsky, 2009). In this situation, all participants become collaborators in the routine, and the storytelling process becomes a negotiable activity with fluid power relations between the parents (with the babysitter) and the child.

## 4.2 *Language Management*

“Language policy is all about choices” (Spolsky, 2009, p. 1). As a key component of language policy, language management reflects explicit instructions and observable efforts for controlling language choices (Spolsky, 2009). It is closely interconnected with language practices and language socialization. From the examples of language practices in the last section, the parents not only facilitated the child’s literacy practice, but also contextualized his language learning through explicit instructions and clear directions.

**Family as a Domain** According to Fishman (1972), the family domain can be illustrated by three characteristics: participants, location and topic. The participants are not simply identified as individuals but by their social roles and relationships. In a family domain, the participants are characterized as father and mother, or other roles, such as babysitter. These characters constitute a home place and create a norm in this location by bringing together their individual living experiences. In this way, the social reality (participants with diverse backgrounds) and the physical reality (a home environment) are connected in the family domain. The social meaning and interpretation of this physical place or location is most relevant to language choice (Spolsky, 2009). For example, M and F, based on their respective living and education experiences in China and the U.S., identify themselves as “Christian Chinese Americans” and reinforce their natural desire of maintaining the heritage language in the bicultural and multicultural environment on the West Coast of the U.S. Another characteristic of a family domain is the selection of topic, i.e., what is appropriate to talk about in a domain. There is also a norm in the home environment where certain topics are encouraged while others are unrecommended. Besides the choice of appropriate topics, the reason for speaking or writing should also be taken into account for understanding a domain (Spolsky, 2009). For instance, M and F chose “Talented Tiger” as a regular educational program to watch at home because it can teach the child not only the basic Chinese literacy, Chinese classic poems, but also Chinese songs, dances and daily habits. The three characteristics of the family domain function as inseparable features which impact how FLP is controlled and managed.

**Control and Authority** Spolsky (2009) holds that a key aspect of language policy in a family is “control of the home language environment” (p. 17). When talking



about which language is primary as their home language, M articulated an explicit language choice:

*We did talk about what language to speak and we decided “Chinese.” We consciously want to make Mandarin Chinese a dominant language at home. Even in the future, when he [C] comes back from school and starts babbling English, I think we want to make a rule that at home we speak Chinese.*

In this interview excerpt, M tells us that she has made a definite choice of Mandarin Chinese as their home language, which aligns with the observations of their daily home language practices. As M states, they set it as a “rule” that they speak Chinese at home and would control the home language as being Chinese even when in the future the child speaks English at home, the words which he picks up from school. This exhibits the authority of her as the mother. Authority, defined as the “rightful power,” is an individual’s subjective perception of rightness (Brown, 2003). In this case, M believes that speaking Chinese is the right thing to do for various reasons, which will be illuminated in the next section on language ideology. Yet this modification occurs naturally with M’s response to C in Chinese when he speaks English at home, which can be understood as a positive reinforcement:

*I think naturally when he picks up “water”, I don’t say “water” back. I say “水” [water]. So he knows Mommy speaks Chinese. But I don’t force him to say “水” [water]. I just respond back in Chinese, to reinforce that.*

However, it is not always natural that the parents have the sole authority to control and modify the child’s language use. Spolsky (2009) believes that, “[i]f... the manager lacks that authority, the management will be unsuccessful” (p. 15). I would argue that even without the invariable authority, the management could also be successful through constant negotiation of the dynamic power relation between the parents and the child.

**Challenges** Since the child goes to an English-only Daycare Center, he learns English from the teachers and his peers. The parents expect him to learn some English words for regular daily use, such as the verb phrase “come in” or a noun like “water.” Nevertheless, there are some phrases, which, surprisingly for the parents, their child learned from the Daycare. For instance, M says:

*He’s catching up a few English words from his daycare. Yesterday, he said “bad boy.” I was like “What is that?” and he said “bad boy” to me! He’s said it for a while. I just didn’t get it. I’m like, “what’s that?” Until yesterday I took something away from him. He was a little mad. So he said “bad boy” to me!*

F also proves it by mentioning the same problem he encountered in a separate interview:

*When he came home, he would say “come in” in English. That’s he learned from Daycare. And we never thought he would say that kind of word like “bad boy”. Now whenever he’s angry, he will say “bad boy.” He called me and my wife “bad boy.” He learned that from Daycare.*

In the two interviews with M and F respectively, they mentioned the word “bad boy” nine times. For parents, this is a significant challenge that their child learned an unpleasant word from outside the home, a language environment they do not control. As the parents explained, they tried to teach the child courteous words inherited from their Chinese cultural tradition and Christian values, which emphasizes being polite and respectful of others. The phrase “bad boy,” therefore, challenges the parents’ control over their child’s language acquisition. This also indicates that the parents are facing a challenge in future if the child could become bilingual when he grows up and participates more social activities in which English is the major language.

In another example, when the parents could not be the sole language authority, they tried to negotiate with the child. For instance, when the family was ready for dinner:

M: “请帮妈妈把电视机关了!明天看。” (Please help mom turn off the television! We’ll watch it tomorrow.)

C: “还有。” (More.) [Looking at M in her eyes.]

F: “明天看。” (We’ll watch it tomorrow.) [Walking by]

[C nodded and turned off the television. M and F both looked happy and clapped for C.]

When M and F wanted to turn off the television, C tried to resist by saying “more,” indicating that he wanted to continue watching the program. He used a simple and direct word to express that he wanted to watch more. His parents negotiated with him by repeating their order. The child listened and followed the second time when the parents gave the order. After that, the parents clapped for the child and gave him a happy look. This reinforced the child’s behavior and encouraged him to respond in kind.

### 4.3 *Language Ideologies*

Defined as the beliefs and opinions about language as a whole or particular languages, language ideology bridges the micro-level of speech and the macro-level of social structure (Ahearn, 2012), and also “guide[s] uses of and values associated with particular languages” as cultural representations in the social world (Shankar, 2008, p. 271). It illustrates how language impacts the human actions and their everyday life as well as shaping the cultural identity and social stereotypes.

**“It’s Just Natural”:** **Maintenance of the Heritage Language** For this family, both M and F feel it was “natural” to maintain their heritage language of Mandarin Chinese in the U.S. They considered it an unconscious action because of their cultural identity based on being born in China, their first language being Chinese, living in a Chinese community, and communicating with family and friends. M stated repeatedly that speaking Chinese is a “natural desire” for them:

It’s just natural we choose to speak Chinese. We’re immersed in a Chinese speaking community. Our friends speak Chinese. It’s natural to speak Chinese when we’re together. Most of my friends are recent immigrants. So they’re more comfortable with Chinese. We have a natural desire to go back to China one day. We want C to be prepared for that. We really hope C can be very rooted and grounded in Chinese language.

Though M believes it’s a natural desire to main the heritage language, there are some explicit reasons for the maintenance of their heritage language, especially being bilingual in English and Chinese.

**Benefits of Being Bilingual** The parents believe that there are several benefits of being bilingual in both English and Mandarin Chinese: instrumental value, familial value, communal value and cognitive value.

*Instrumental Value* The parents believe that there is an advantage to speaking Mandarin Chinese as a communicative tool. China has become more important for its impact on global economy and politics and plays a crucial role on the international stage. They teach their child Mandarin now for preparation of his future career for cross cultural communication between China and the US. This resonates with the previous FLP studies conducted in Singapore, Scotland, England, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Australia and Canada (Curd-Christiansen, 2014; Kopeliovich, 2010; Schwartz & Moin, 2011). Believing that bilingual education at home provides more socioeconomic opportunities and status enhancement later in their children’s life, the parents implemented bilingual or multilingual family language policies because bilingualism is considered as an essential skillset for children’s future career in a long term.

*Familial Value* Since all their immediate and extended family members are in China, the parents want their child to learn Chinese so as to communicate with his grandparents and other relatives. The parents believe that effective language communication can help build good intergenerational relationship which is highly valued in Chinese culture.

*Communal Value* As Christians, the parents attend a Chinese Church every week. They conduct different types of activities for fellowship with other Chinese Christians. The parents take their child to the fellowship every week, exposing him to other Chinese community members. F mentioned that it is meritorious that a bilingual person can translate his father’s sermon from Chinese into English in church. F wants his child to become fluent in both English and Chinese so as to serve the Chinese Christian Church community in future.

*Developmental Value* The parents believe that teaching the child two languages at an early age will help with his social, cognitive and emotional development. They stated that speaking two languages will increase the child’s brain functionality in terms of reasoning and logical thinking.

**Constructing Identity** People’s talk, beliefs and attitudes continually construct an identity “within the vectors of resemblance and distinction” (Barker & Galasiński,

2001, p. 30). These similarities and differences in everyday language practices in a culture form an identity which reflects linguistic profiling and social stereotyping. When discussing her earlier years of immigrant experience in the U.S., M highlighted the insecurity of her identity of being a 1.5 generation immigrant from China, as well as her feeling of marginalization from the larger American culture and school environment because of her Chinese accent. M commented:

It (my accent) makes me feel ashamed. We have the word “FOB”, “Fresh off the Boat”. That’s how they described recent immigrants. It definitely has a derogative meaning. They’re saying it to make fun of you. The American kids will do that. So you don’t want to appear like a “FOB”. You want to fit in and language is a very obvious indicator. It’s something that you feel that you know you don’t fit in. They have their groups and you’re always with the Chinese people. You speak differently. You dress differently. You just look different. And of course as teenagers we want to fit in. Peer pressure is a very big deal in high school. It was not a good experience. We’re just part of the growing process. I think most of the kids who came in that age all doubt with it. Later on I feel really secure knowing my identity then I was okay with it (my accent). But in those times there was nobody to support. There was no church.

In this excerpt, M illustrated how her identity as a 1.5 generation Chinese immigrant shaped the way she experienced high school in the U.S. and how language(s) (first and second) impacted her identity construction during the earlier years after her immigration. For M, the accented English creates a linguistic stereotype, usually defined as East or South Asians’ “broken” English with a “fobby accent.” Western language ideology shapes a judgment of “standard” English which serves the interests of a specific social and cultural community, marginalizing other language varieties as “sub-standard,” slang or accented (Ahearn, 2012). The denigrated way of speaking associates with minoritized racial and ethnic identities, making M feel that it was difficult to assimilate (Ahearn, 2012). Being categorized as a “FOB,” M doubted her racial and ethnic identity and felt lack of support. “FOB”, a term generated from Western language “ideology of contempt” (Dorian, 1998), is usually used by the “upper middle-class...teens...to label second- and third-generation middle-class teens whose parents are nonskilled workers” (Shankar, 2008, p. 270). M is an example of the many 1.5 generation Chinese immigrants being isolated and marginalized as a “FOB”. Though M finally found her support from church and the Chinese Christian community later in her life, the sense of security for the 1.5 generation immigrants’ identity is still a significant issue which should be aware of. M’s case demonstrates how language use shapes the 1.5 generation immigrants’ identity, and how language ideology reinforces the meaning of race and ethnicity. M’s accented English reveals her racial status and explains the isolation and marginalization to a certain extent. After M converted to Christianity, she found social and emotional support from the Chinese church community, and felt more secure of who she is and not being ashamed of recognizing her multilayered identity. Because of the racial and ethnic experiences, M decided to make Chinese as their family language to serve the Chinese church community.

## 5 Conclusion

This study examined the *de facto* family language policies of a 1.5 generation Chinese immigrant family on the West Coast of the U.S. Spolsky’s (2004) three components of language policy theoretically framed the study and answered the research questions. The daily language practices illustrated what FLP looks like in this family. The language management issues illuminated the challenges the parents face for implementing FLP. Language ideologies demonstrate how the parents perceive their mother language. The three components of language policy interrelated as a meaningful whole and affected each other significantly. For instance, the parents applied language management strategies for organizing the language practice of interactive storytelling and delivered their language ideologies of the mother language throughout the ritual.

Bridging the emergent field of FLP and language acquisition, the study also illuminates how the home language practices benefit children’s social, cognitive and emotional development. For instance, in the bedtime Bible storytelling activity, the parents connected Nehemiah’s building the wall with the child’s playing his blocks and taught him the word “block” which he called “Bi—Ba” in a fully contextualized situation. The parents also expressed their hope in the prayer after telling the story that the child becomes zealous in loving God as Nehemiah. This language practice of FLP involves the child’s lexical acquisition, cognitive enhancement to make connections of two similar activities, the participation in social settings, and emotional growth for love and empathy. In addition, by telling the Bible story in Chinese every night, the parents tried to help the child understand the bilingual and bicultural context and construct an identity of being a Christian Chinese American. Looking at FLP from the racial and ethnic experiences of the family members, the implicit impact of Western European language ideology on language practice and planning becomes explicit. The challenge for the parents lie ahead, however, on whether the child can become a fluent bilingual speaker when he grows up and socializes more in an English dominant environment. The future study of FLP, therefore, leads to longitudinal studies on second generation immigrants’ bilingualism and cross-cultural language socialization.

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# Between Implementing and Creating: Mothers of Children with Plurilingual Family Background and the Czech Republic's Language Acquisition Policy



Helena Özörencik and Magdalena Antonia Hromadová

**Abstract** The paper examines the language acquisition management cycle perpetuated by the state language acquisition policy in the Czech Republic and how it is dealt with in thematically oriented biographical interviews conducted with Czech mothers rearing children in families where multiple languages are used and transmitted. It analyses the discursive resources and narrative strategies used to construct biographical accounts in order to investigate the emic perspective on the micro-macro interplay of the language acquisition management cycle. Although the analysed narratives deal with experiences involving children with plurilingual family backgrounds, they seem to reproduce the discursive resources underpinned by the monolingual self-perception of Czech society. The analysis suggests that this is a result of comprehensive sense-making processes. On the one hand, mothers construct accounts of some of their activities in terms of the adjustment designs formulated on the macro level. On the other hand, some of them challenge the role of mere “implementers”, assigned to them within the language acquisition management cycle, through their narratives.

**Keywords** Czech Republic · Language acquisition management · Monolingualism · Narrative strategies · Parents' language acquisition policies · Plurilingualism

## 1 Introduction

The linguistic landscape of the territory of the present-day Czech Republic has for centuries been characterized by the coexistence of individuals and communities with different linguistic backgrounds (Neustupný & Nekvapil, 2003). In addition,

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the Czech Republic has become a target country for migration in the last twenty years (Drbohlav, 2011).

Plurilingualism has existed in Czech society continuously, but the dominant language ideology has been based on the community's self-perception as linguistically homogenous ("in the Czech Republic, Czech is spoken") and monolingual ("Czechs speak Czech") (Sloboda, 2010). As a result, society at large may regard the presence of individuals speaking other languages, especially in the context of recent migration, as temporary and therefore unrelated to its self-image. However, there is also a growing number of native speakers of Czech "speaking not only Czech" on account of having been brought up by one Czech parent and the parent's partner from a different linguistic background.<sup>1</sup> The existence of children growing up in such plurilingual family settings is a challenge to the society's self-perception in various respects. The children have been born into Czech society, but have trouble finding their place in it: ideologically and, sometimes, practically.

The command of language(s) makes up a great deal of the social capital of individuals. Individual language repertoires, therefore, become a relevant part of the agenda of many social actors (cf. Cooper, 1989). Seeking to influence language acquisition by the population, these actors design language acquisition policies (LAPs), that is "ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change" (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. xi). The Czech Republic is a country where the state LAP, guided by the requirement that each EU-citizen should be able to use "two foreign languages" besides their "mother tongue", strives to equip individuals with some sort of plurilingual competence (Národní plán výuky cizích jazyků). However, as we will argue, even this plurilingualism-promoting LAP grows out of language attitudes that are firmly grounded in the worldview that is based on monolingualism and in which the ethnical or political categories are interchangeable with the linguistic ones. As a result, the education system treats all Czech citizens as monolingual mother tongue speakers of Czech and as foreign language learners, as far as other languages are concerned.

The dominant language ideology and state LAP are, however, only one part of the Czech sociolinguistic landscape. Language acquisition<sup>2</sup> is inseparably linked to everyday interactions and involves, at different stages, individuals acting according to their dispositions, needs and aims. Indeed, the Czech state LAP gives individuals room to do what they think is best for them. For instance, parents are entitled to take

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<sup>1</sup>Statistics show that there is a relatively constant number of intermarriages between Czech and foreign citizens over the last five years (Český statistický úřad [Czech Statistical Office], 2015). Unfortunately, there are no statistics available concerning the mother tongue or languages of children enrolled in Czech schools. The only statistics available concern their citizenship in terms of being a Czech citizen or not (see Český statistický úřad [Czech Statistical Office], 2015). As children in plurilingual families where at least one parent is Czech usually hold the Czech citizenship, there is no data available as to how many of these children actually attend Czech schools.

<sup>2</sup>Language acquisition here means all the processes through which individuals become familiar with a language and develop their skills in it. The term "language acquisition" is used interchangeably with the term "language learning" and covers both conscious and unconscious processes.

decisions related to their children's schooling while educational institutions are supposed to provide the advice needed for such decisions (cf. Act no. 561/2004;<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2001). The room for their individual input currently seems very limited, suggesting that there is a tendency to expect parents to conform to the general educational tools and aims. But there is still a certain chance for parents to find a place for their children within the LAP or even create one, where none has been provided by the LAP designers. That means that those who are ascribed the role of "policy implementers" by the LAP, i.e., the parents, have the potential to become its "interpreters, appropriators and creators" (Johnson, 2013, p. 2) and maybe even contribute to the bottom-up revision of both the LAP and its ideological groundings.

To understand how the state LAP, an abstract phenomenon, actually impacts the reality of language acquisition, the actorship of individuals needs to be considered in a way that provides sufficient room for them to express their views. Our paper focuses on this very task.

## 2 Theoretical Considerations: The Micro-Macro Interplay as an Everyday Task

In this paper, we will concentrate on the interface of social processes that "move and develop on a continuum of layered scales, with the strictly local (micro) and the global (macro) as extremes" (Blommaert, 2007, p. 1). In the language policy and planning (LPP) literature, there seems to be a gradually growing interest in the different scales of social processes (cf. Johnson & Ricento, 2013). This is also reflected in a variety of systems developed to explore "the relationships between the macro and micro dimensions of language use" (Hult, 2010, p. 7) within the wider social, economic, cultural and historical context, in order to capture the "local, situated, contextual and contingent ways of understanding languages and language policies" (Pennycook, 2006, p. 64).

The approach we find useful in this respect is actually an older analytical framework, Language Management Theory (LMT). It originated in the work of scholars arguing in favour of distinguishing between essentially value-free LPP scholarship on the one hand, and language planning as a political enterprise linked to the modernization of developing countries after the end of colonialism, on the other (Nekvapil, 2012, p. 5; cf. Johnson & Ricento, 2013, pp. 8–9).

Formulated extensively in the late 1980s (cf. Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987) LMT is based on the observation that language users commonly and habitually use language to behave towards language(s) (Neustupný & Nekvapil, 2003; cf. Jakobson,

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<sup>3</sup> Česká republika [Czech Republic]. (2013, November 10). *Zákon č. 561/2004 o předškolním, základním, středním, vyšším odborném a jiném vzdělávání (školský zákon), ve znění pozdějších předpisů* [Act no. 561/2004 about preschool, primary, high school, colleges and other education (school law), in the wording of subsequent amendments]. <http://www.msmt.cz/file/19743>. Accessed 15 January 2015. Further: Act no. 561/2004

1999). Instances of such metalinguistic behaviour in everyday interactions are referred to as simple language management. In simple language management, only the features relevant for the ongoing interaction are typically approached directly (“noted” in the LMT terminology). However, in evaluations and potential adjustment designs applied to the noted elements, phenomena of higher complexity, such as language ideologies (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2013), are (often only implicitly) at play.

By contrast, a language policy, including a language acquisition policy (LAP), is an “explicit ‘adjustment design’ [...] that a group of social actors has arrived at and has agreed on in the course of organized language management” (Sloboda, Szabó-Gilinger, Vigers, & Šimičić, 2010, p. 96). Organized language management here means metalinguistic activities that are essentially trans-interactional: they are not concerned with unique interactions but with language as a system or communicative tool and they do not involve interacting individuals but social networks, typically institutions in positions of power (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015, p. 7).

Returning back to the issue of relating the different dimensions of language use to each other, the LMT perspective considers the main exploration challenge to consist in addressing the interplay (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015) between complex organized management efforts and the relevant simple language management. In this respect, one of the theoretical conceptualizations available is the language management cycle (Nekvapil, 2009; cf. Canagarajah, 2006). This concept reflects the fact that not all the problems encountered on the micro level of everyday interactions are or can be resolved in their immediate context but initiate a language management (LM) process in which the macro level is involved as well: The problems are addressed on the macro level, where the relevant metadiscourse can be used or produced at an opportune moment. The outcome of such an endeavour is usually meant to be implemented on the micro level again, in subsequent everyday interaction, where the LM process is terminated and the LM cycle including the micro-macro-micro dynamic concluded. The concept of the LM cycle fits both individual situations delineated in terms of time and space (such as consulting a normative dictionary when writing an official letter) as well as processes of higher complexity,<sup>4</sup> such as the implementation of the state LAP.

In the context of the Czech Republic the adjustment designs are formulated in different documents on the macro level of the LM cycle perpetuated by the state LAP. These documents are then usually not labelled as language policy documents, but as educational policy documents.<sup>5</sup> Among others, they aim to change the original

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<sup>4</sup>Complexity here means that the different phases of the language management process are split between different actors who conduct their activities in different spatial and temporal contexts.

<sup>5</sup>Some more general documents, such as the National Plan for Foreign Language Education (Národní plán výuky cizích jazyků [National Programme for Teaching Foreign Languages], n.d.) or the White Paper issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (2001), define the general objectives of public education, including, to some extent, with regard to language acquisition. The details of what is to be taught at schools, however, are provided for elsewhere, especially in the binding Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education issued by one of the Ministry’s departments (Odbor, 2013).

monolingualism among pupils into a specific form of controlled, strictly defined, subsequent plurilingualism<sup>6</sup> (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 2001, pp. 41–42). Presumably, this adjustment design is based on seeing plurilingualism as beneficial in practice (Odbor, 2013, p. 18). The development of competence in the Czech language is addressed as an essentially monolingual topic (cf. Odbor, 2013). The command of Czech is related not to linguistic but rather to sociocultural objectives that are ideologically grounded in the concept of the nation as a historically formed community of individuals sharing the same monolingual background.<sup>7</sup>

Conforming to the LM cycle concept, these adjustment designs are meant to be implemented on the micro level. The documents that can be interpreted as formulations of LAP not only spell out the adjustment designs but also prescribe (often in a legally enforceable way) the implementation of the adjustment designs during the in-class interaction of pupils and individual educators (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 2001).

This suggests that actors of different natures are involved on the different levels of the LM cycle that the state LAP perpetuates. On the macro level, these are state institutions, whereas on the micro level the adjustment designs are carried out by individual educators. However, as suggested above, in the Czech context, an important role in the LAP implementation is passed on to the parents who are legally entitled to make the decisions related to their children's schooling (see Act no. 561/2004; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 2001). Although they are not directly involved in designing the LAP or in the interactions relevant for language acquisition, it is their decisions and behaviour that perpetuate the interplay of the different levels of the language management cycle. Parents for instance choose the institution where their child is going to be educated (cf. Act no. 561/2004) or the different foreign languages their child is supposed to acquire (cf. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, 2001, p. 39). In other words, they decide between the alternative adjustment designs and the forms of their implementation. Obviously, parents can also extend the range of adjustment designs related to their children's

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<sup>6</sup>Accordingly, the learning contents that are (potentially) relevant for language acquisition are split into two different domains in the Framework Education Programme (Odbor, 2013): foreign language teaching and mother tongue education. The two domains, in turn, provide the basis for delineating subjects taught during compulsory education (foreign language and second foreign language, on the one hand, and Czech language and literature, on the other). The objectives of foreign language education are linked to language skills as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (*ibid.*, p. 18). Both foreign languages are taught from a complete beginner level with the aim of reaching A2 and A1 levels, respectively.

<sup>7</sup>In terms of mother tongue education, pupils are expected to develop not only basic skills in language education as such, but also skills needed to understand other educational domains (Odbor, 2013, p. 17). The Czech language is not only the language of instruction throughout the curriculum, it is also taken for granted as pupils' mother tongue and attributed corresponding weight as an overall tool with respect to cognition and individual development as well as social cohesion. Pupils leaving public schools should, apart from possessing certain other skills, "acknowledge the [Czech] language as a means through which the nation has evolved historically and culturally, and therefore as an important force unifying national society" (*ibid.*, p. 18 – our English rendition).

language acquisition by enrolling them in private language schools, heritage language lessons etc.

The parents' role is not further elaborated on in the LAP documents and it is certainly limited by factors such as the legal framework,<sup>8</sup> parents' cultural, social and economic capital, linguistic attitudes and ideologies or their own and their children's physical and psychological conditions. However, at the same time it gives parents an opportunity to take action, for instance, when their children do not share the linguistic background that is supposed to be the starting point of language acquisition and the key to skills and knowledge from other subject areas within the educational system.

Returning to the issue of relating the different dimensions of social processes, our brief summary of the LM cycle perpetuated by the state LAP suggests that, in the context we address in our paper, the relation between different scales of social processes is not just a theoretical concept. It is rather something individuals accomplish in their everyday tasks. As such, the macro-micro interplay within the LA management cycle can be studied from the emic perspective, as part of individuals' life experience with language and society. We believe that further exploration in this direction can contribute not only to understanding the particular instances but also to theoretically conceptualizing the micro-macro interplay that appears to be crucial for LPP scholarship.

### 3 Methodology and Research Question

For the reasons discussed above, research into the interplay between different levels of the LM cycle involves acknowledging the crucial role of the family in implementing the state LAP. Studying metalinguistic processes in families has proven relevant for experts from different fields of linguistics. Two main focus areas can be distinguished in this strand of research: interactions within families with regards to their metalinguistic aspects, and metalinguistic behaviour of families outside concrete interactions (cf. Sherman, Hromadová, Özörencik, & Zaepernicková, 2016). In the second focus area, family language policy (FLP) research has evolved as a subfield of language policy studies (cf. Schwartz, 2010). We wish to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in this subfield by examining the question of how families interact with LAPs in terms of their own attitudes and actions towards language. A range of methods are used in FLP research, with different types of qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews dominating (*ibid.*, p. 185). Data collected in this manner have proven useful for exploring some aspects related to the role of the family in language maintenance, transmission and acquisition, especially in plurilingual settings (see e.g., Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; Schwartz & Verschik, 2013).

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<sup>8</sup>For instance by the fact that school attendance in the first nine years is compulsory in the Czech Republic.

As in other fields of the social sciences, the problem inherent to the interview method consist in capturing the authentic views of the individual respondent rather than the views imposed by the research situation (cf. Ten Have, 2004; for interviews in the FLP context see Schwartz, 2010). We believe that biographical sociology (Schütze, 1983, 1984, 1999, 2007) provides a suitable option in this respect. This method is based on the premise that, in their everyday lives, individuals perform biographical work, i.e., recount and structure their life experiences (Schütze, 1984, p. 78) to make sense of them. The exploratory approach offered by biographical sociology focuses on collecting and analysing biographical accounts to identify the internal organizing and sense-making principles of individual biographies.

An individual's biographical work consists "of narrative recollection; reflection of symbolic, 'deeper' meanings revealing self historical *gestalts* of life; an analytical comparison of alternative understandings; imagining a personal future that harmoniously or contrastively fits to one's personal past; reflective decision making and evaluating the probable outcomes" (Schütze, 2007, pp. 6–7). By examining the structures and cognitive figures that individuals build on, it is possible to identify the recurring and socially relevant types of such structures and figures (ibid.). However, the structures and cognitive figures are not identified by an analysis of the mere content of accounts. The analytical focus rather lies on the narrative strategies which individuals employ to construct their accounts.<sup>9</sup> The biographical method is based on the assumption that, in their biographical accounts, individuals develop narrative strategies that represent, reflect and explicate the development of their authentic biographical identity and the social process of its construction (Schütze, 1983, p. 286).

The accounts, which can be analysed using the tools of biographical sociology, are sometimes available in the form of personal notes or even as published biographies. However, they can also be elicited by employing a method called biographical narrative interview (cf. Schütze, 2007). At the outset of each interview (or during the preliminary talks), the thematic focus is broadly set to the life experience of the interviewee. The interviewer should act as an "understanding listener", i.e., only interrupt the interviewee when clarification is required (Schütze, 2007, p. 5). This maxim is motivated by the assumption that any intervention may influence the biographical relevance system of the interviewee.

However, as any interaction between humans, a biographical narrative interview involves individuals with certain attitudes to as well as expectations and perceptions

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<sup>9</sup>In biographical accounts, an individual's life may be depicted in three manners: life as lived, life as experienced, life as told (Sloboda, 2011, p. 285). Analogically, by analysing biographies, we may find out how things were, how individuals experienced them and how they integrate them into their accountable, retrospective versions of their own lives (ibid.). While there may be doubts about the factuality, i.e. about how things were in reality, of any biographical account, the tools the individuals use to make their biography tellable and accountable, i.e. the narrative strategies and discursive practices, provide sound analytical material. Moreover, these practices and strategies offer insights into the cognitive structures of the biographer, i.e. into how the person in question has experienced his or her life, and how that life is being communicated to the interviewer.



of interactional norms. It is difficult to assume that these would be completely set aside just because an interaction takes place beyond the everyday context. When someone who is aware of being known to the researcher as a client of a requalification centre (cf. Schütze, 2007) is approached to take part in an interview, it is possible that he or she will orient his or her behaviour in the interaction to this piece of knowledge and e.g., accordingly adjust his or her understanding of the maxim of relevance (Grice, 1975). This might result in the interviewee making an effort to meet the expectations of the researcher by mentioning details from previous failed careers. The thematic and narrative structure of the interaction is thus shaped by the cooperation between the two actors involved, even where the interviewer does not interrupt the respondent.

Therefore, it seems more realistic to apply the concept of the thematically oriented biographical interviews (Hájek, Havlík, & Nekvapil, 2014). This type of interview explicitly acknowledges that in biographical interviews, even “without any overt pressure, the interviewer is searching for an intersection between their own relevance system and the [...] relevance system of the interviewee, so as to capture the respondent’s own (emic) perspective as much as possible. In this regard, the respondent’s biography is merely a means of obtaining a unique and authentic account; the biography itself is not of special significance to the researcher [...]” (ibid., p. 52). The tools used to find such an intersection can be tracked when the interview is approached as an interactional event.

The biographical method has successfully been used in a variety of fields, including in linguistic research (e.g., Nekvapil, 2003; Franceschini, 2003). This suggests that the biographical method may help us overcome some specific challenges faced by interview-based research on linguistic and metalinguistic topics, particularly the problem that only certain types of respondents’ metalinguistic knowledge are accessible in a research situation. The respondents might, naturally, not be willing to share or able to recall all details of their lives. Moreover, some facts and ideas that may be very relevant for the research question may not be perceived as such (and therefore not brought up) by the respondents, as their relevance systems do not relate them to the topics investigated.

For instance, Franceschini (2003) developed the concept of “unfocused language acquisition” to label situations when a language is acquired without the awareness of the individual. Specifically, Franceschini analysed a biographical account of a respondent, a young female Turkish immigrant in Germany. The use of German in interactions reported by the respondent was not consistent with the time she reported as the start of her “learning the language”. The analysis revealed that the respondent provided accounts of her speaking German before actually reflecting on “learning” it. Franceschini’s respondent related “learning” to an active involvement of her as a learner and believed that language competence could only result from “learning” so understood. The period before she started “learning” the language was therefore invisible to her as far as her competence in German was concerned and would probably have remained invisible even for the researcher had the biographical approach not been used.

Having studied Czech Germans' biographical accounts, Nekvapil (2003) considered the applicability of the biographical method in sociolinguistic research. He concluded that individual autobiographies also include certain "patterns of language-biography narrative" (Nekvapil, 2003, p. 80). Such patterns relate the individual accounts to the intersubjective vision of the language situation in the community in question. Nekvapil assumes that "language autobiographies naturally include aspects of other persons' biographies, family language biographies or, to a varying extent, aspects of language situations of a particular language community" (*ibid.*, p. 64).

This finding is of particular importance to us, as we are interested in the interplay of the micro and macro levels of metalinguistic processes. The conceptual and linguistic resources used by respondents to formulate facts and ideas related to language can, to a certain degree, have their origin in macro-level discourses and be conveniently made to fit the communication frame of the research. When this is done in the context of a personal biography, the macro discourses may become part of the biographical work, i.e., as discursive resources that are accounted for as commonly known and acceptable. However, a biography is based on depicting the individual everyday experience. Organizing these perspectives into an accountable narrative might require specific narrative strategies in which the micro-macro dynamics is actually re-presented. Therefore, an analysis of discursive resources and narrative strategies can provide an important insight into the topic of micro-macro interplay.

As suggested above, we hope to make use of these advantages of the biographical method to reveal the emic perspective on the micro-macro interplay of the LA management cycle perpetuated by the state LAP in the case of pupils with plurilingual family background. We wish to reconstruct this perspective by addressing the research question which discursive resources our respondents employ and how they organize them in narrative strategies to construct biographical accounts of different encounters with the state LAP.

## 4 Data

The analysed data were gathered within a qualitative exploratory study on intergenerational language transmission in plurilingual families living in Prague, established as a result of recent migration processes (Uherek, 2008). The analysis is based on interviews conducted with the mothers.<sup>10</sup> All mothers were born and grew up in the Czech Republic in monolingual, Czech speaking families. Fathers had various linguistic backgrounds and they came to the Czech Republic as adults or young adults.

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<sup>10</sup>All mothers took part in an initial thematically oriented biographical interview and with the majority of them a follow-up interview was realised as well. In the follow-up interview the interviewers posed questions in order to clarify and/or exemplify accounts from the first interview. However, even the follow-up interviews are of narrative nature and contain a great amount of accounts from the respondents' biographies.



The following table shows the sex (m – male, f – female) and age (in years) of the children at the time of the first interview and the language used in the family besides Czech as reported by the mothers:

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Languages used in the family besides Czech
Mrs B	f-17	m-15	m-11	Serbian
Mrs F	m-7	m-5		French, English
Mrs L	f-7			Slovak, Spanish
Mrs O	m-11	f-9		English
Mrs P	m-10	m-9		English, Spanish
Mrs R	f-10	m-7		English
Mrs T	m-10	m-0		English
Mrs U	m-7	m-5		Turkish, English
Mrs Y	m-11	f-7		Greek, English

The mothers had been recruited through acquaintances, the interviewers' existing social networks (church, educational institutions etc.), the friend-of-a-friend method or via random recruiting. The individual interviews were conducted by female interviewers with a plurilingual family background (mostly by one of the two authors of this paper). The interviews focused on the general family biography but the respondents were informed that the interviewers professionally specialize on topics related to languages. The interviewees themselves very often oriented to this perspective in the interview. The interviews with the mothers were all held in Czech, excerpts presented in this paper are translations made by the authors. English translation is simplified as to conserve the meaning of the utterances.<sup>11</sup>

Since all of our interviewees live in Prague, the Czech capital, or in the surrounding area, their situation is to some extent specific as there is a wide range of schools and other educational institutions at hand – considerably more so than in any other Czech region. In Prague, mainstream education at public primary schools is complemented by various institutions offering language courses in the afternoon and activities connected to minority cultures (and languages). There are even private schools (charging tuition fees) where the language of instruction is other than Czech.

<sup>11</sup> We use the following transcription conventions: [...] part of the transcript omitted; (0.2) pause, length in seconds. Names and other personally identifiable information concerning the research participants have been changed.

## 5 Language Acquisition Management and Family Biographies

As suggested above, the biographies we analyse use specific narrative strategies that combine individual biographical experiences with intersubjective discursive resources to construct an accountable biography. As biographies consist of accounts of individual actions, the discursive resources we encounter to a great extent build on institutional expectation patterns (IEPs). IEPs (Schütze, 2007) are normative scenarios that individuals infer from their social experience and that suggest how they should cope with various socially relevant situations that they come across in everyday life. Individuals can also draw on an IEP as a discursive resource to construct accounts of their actions acceptable to other members of society.

This is also true for the moment when parents enrol their children in educational institutions, which is actually their first encounter with the state LAP and the LA management cycle that it perpetuates. These two institutions are both at the centre of our interest. The normative nature of the IEP as well as many aspects of the school enrolment process were not detailed by the interviewed mothers, who are thoroughly socialized in Czech society, as they expected that these could be inferred from the intersubjective knowledge about school enrolment. In the following account of Mrs. B,<sup>12</sup> the level of conformity with the IEP is so high that, as suggested, little narrative work is devoted to the first encounter with the school system:

**Excerpt 1** Mrs. B They go to a normal primary school, but they actually started elsewhere. Maria transferred from a primary school to Kladenská school, which was then what is called a faculty school with extended language instruction.<sup>13</sup> Now that's not the case anymore, you know, it nowadays actually functions as an ordinary primary school from first grade upwards. That was actually the case when Michael went there, he went straight to first grade in Kladenská.

When Mrs. B talked about her youngest son Michael's current schooling (Excerpt 1, line 1), she took the narrative back to her oldest child Maria's early primary school years (Excerpt 1, lines 2–3). The daughter's educational trajectory seems to be particularly important for the family, since the two younger children followed the path first "invented" for their sister. The nodal moment of the narrative, though, is not the very first school enrolment but the moment of the daughter's transfer from one school to another, specializing in foreign-language education, at that time educating pupils only from third grade upwards (a "school with extended language instruction"; Excerpt 1, lines 4–5). Since the school Maria was first enrolled in is being referred to with the generic expression "a primary school" (Excerpt 1, line

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<sup>12</sup>Her husband is a Serb from Bosnia and Herzegovina, their children are: f-17, m-15, m-11.

<sup>13</sup>Faculty schools cooperate with universities and are therefore known to be "up-to-date" on teaching methods and in other respects. Schools with extended language instruction used to take pupils only from third grade upwards and subject to an entrance exam.

2–3), it becomes clear that its identity might have been irrelevant. The choice of a school became important and, therefore reflected on, only in the context of Maria transferring to the school referred to by its name “Kladenská” (Excerpt 1, line 3). The school “Kladenská” is later described as a “proven” educational institution in the interview, indicating that this need not have been the case for the first, unnamed primary school. The mother’s narrative is still logically acceptable, as the “omitted” biographical facts are easily inferable from the IEP relating to school enrolment.

Other narrative accounts of the school enrolment process also rely on such unarticulated premises. The premises of “closest school” (that normally children are enrolled in a school close to the family’s place of residence) and “public school” (that this school is normally a public one) are of central importance in this respect. This aspect of the IEP is related even to legislation concerning school attendance. Legally (cf. Česká republika, 2013) parents may choose any school in the Czech Republic for their children, but schools are obliged to accept a child only if the child’s permanent residence is within their catchment area. Especially in urban areas, schools’ catchment areas are based on population density and relative distance between the school and potential pupils’ homes.

The following excerpt of Mrs. F’s<sup>14</sup> narrative provides an example of a narrative strategy used to address the fact that the IEP related to school enrolment was not enacted and the school her older son attends is a private institution. Therefore specific narrative work is required: Mrs. F retraced the boy’s educational trajectory, beginning with the pre-school stage, including the moment of his transfer from crèche to kindergarten (Excerpt 2, line 3). The subsequent narrative offers an argument as to why, in the end, the IEP was abandoned and replaced by another scenario: the boy enrolled in a plurilingual class of a private pre-school, which provided the family a grant covering the full extent of the costs (Excerpt 2, line 11).

The way Mrs. F addresses the fact that the family opted for an alternative to the IEP also reveals some of the IEP’s other features, especially the premise related to potential pupils’ age (the boy did not meet the minimum-age criterion; Excerpt 2, line 3). However, the “closest school” premise was also clearly a relevant point of reference for her narrative. She identified the crèche by its geographical location (the “Pankrác crèche”; Excerpt 2, line 1 – Pankrác is a neighbourhood in Prague), thereby also expressing conformity with the IEP and supporting her claim that the family wished to adhere to the IEP related to school enrolment. This claim is fully developed in the summarizing coda of her account (Excerpt 2, lines 11–14).

**Excerpt 2** Mrs. F [...] we used to visit the Pankrác crèche from the moment when our child was one year old. And when he was two and a half years old, he’s born in December, I actually wanted to enroll him in kindergarten, but –seriously – the year he was born saw the most births since the seventies [...] exactly at that time, sometime in March or April, when we were making our decision, we were contacted by the French embassy. They were opening a new bilingual English-French class at the

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<sup>14</sup>Her husband is from France, their children are m-7, m-5.

French lycée [...] and we were told we'd probably have a chance to get a full grant [...] So because of that he actually goes there because he didn't get into Czech kindergarten but it wasn't like we intended him to.

## 6 Mothers' Creative Metamorphoses

The comparison of the two examples provided in the previous section suggests that narrative strategies vary as to the extent in which they are reflective of the unique features of the mothers' individual biographical experiences. The second example (Excerpt 2) illustrates that this reflexivity increases when mothers talk about not adhering to the IEP. This includes the family's experience with the LA management cycle, and therefore also the state LAP.

Accounts in which mothers argue for or even justify their non-adherence to the IEP can be found in most family biographies in our dataset. In several cases, the biographical reflexivity in these accounts of non-adherence had a transformative effect on the narrative strategies used by the mothers to construct the accounts of their experiences.

To illustrate this point, consider the narrative of Mrs. T<sup>15</sup> (Excerpts 3–6). It includes an exhaustive account of the family's divergence from the education-related IEP. Most probably, this exhaustiveness results from the dramatic impact the experience had on the everyday life of the family and from the fact that the second, follow-up, interview was conducted when the family was still experiencing this impact.

Mrs. T is a mother of two sons. Her husband, their father, is from Tanzania. Czech and English are used and transmitted in the family. Mrs. T reported her older son Ben to be a bilingual speaker of Czech and English, but lacking the formalized background, such as grammar and spelling knowledge, in English. At the time of the first interview, Ben was 10 years old and her younger son had just been born. The second interview took place approximately six months after the first.

In the first interview Mrs. T gave an account of the family's decision not to adhere to the IEP and enrol Ben in a private primary school in the family's neighbourhood. She seems to be loosely linking this account to the "closest school" premise under the school enrolment IEP (using the expression "here" in Excerpt 3, line 1) and, in particular, to the "public school" premise. In her description, she denies the school is a special one (Excerpt 3, line 3–4), qualifying its special features as minor (by using the expression "just" in Excerpt 3, line 4). This implies that the IEP itself is not contested; it had only not been enacted in this particular case:

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<sup>15</sup>Her husband is from Tanzania, their children are: m-10, m-0.

### Excerpt 3

- Mrs. T Yeah he goes to a private primary school here.  
[...]
- Mrs. T It's a private primary school and they're not special in any way, there's just a family-like atmosphere and they have only one class in each grade.
- MH<sup>16</sup> Hmm.
- Mrs. T And a small number of children in each class and foreign language instruction starting in first grade.
- MH Yeah.
- Mrs. T We actually wanted them<sup>17</sup> to offer English from the first grade.

Only after this does she turn to the expectation that the boy could benefit<sup>18</sup> from early English instruction in school (Excerpt 3, lines 10–11): The expression “actually” (Excerpt 3, line 11) used in this account suggests that, for Mrs. T, such an expectation is a part of her family's more or less elaborate plan<sup>19</sup> for Ben's education. As the narrative develops, this aspect of the plan is recounted in the light of the experience with the plan's execution.

In the following example, Mrs. T critically reflects on the family's educational plan for the first time (Excerpt 4). She expresses her disappointment at the gap between expectations and reality (Excerpt 4, line 10–13), illustrating it with an account of a dispute between her son and his English teacher over a “vocabulary dictation” (Excerpt 4, line 1). At this point, she constructs the cause of the disagreement as the teacher's unwillingness to compromise on her expectations concerning the English competences of pupils (excerpt 4, line 6–7) and the son's loss of motivation and trust in the teacher as a consequence of such behaviour (Excerpt 4, line 11).

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<sup>16</sup>Magdalena Hromadová.

<sup>17</sup>Meaning the school.

<sup>18</sup>We can assume that this plan was devised in the context of considerations that language acquired in an interactional setting in the family should further be developed by some sort of formal language education. However, Mrs. T's account of her son's language proficiency expressed earlier could have been rationalised, i.e. formed at some later moment in the biographical time, e.g. under the influence of the encounter with the educational setting.

<sup>19</sup>We use the word “plan” to refer to Schütze's term “action scheme”, which is a structure used in biographical narratives that may be described as the “intentional principle of one's biography” (Schütze, 1983, p. 288 – our own rendition). “Educational plan”, then, refers to the principle applied by mothers in relation to the family's decisions on school enrolment.

**Excerpt 4**

Mrs. T Now he's just brought home a vocabulary dictation and he got a three.<sup>20</sup>

MH Uh.

Mrs. T Because he just writes down something else than what they've been given as an assignment. Say they have twelve new words: the teacher just wants exactly these words. Yeah and then he just writes down other words, for example.

[...]

Mrs. T So instead of English being as I thought that it would be, just fine, for him there's no motivation. Ben claims the teacher actually prefers girls, which really bothers him.

This account of a conflict between the English teacher and Ben is a lead-in to the main narrative line of the second interview (Excerpts 5 and 6) with Mrs. T. Between the first (Excerpts 3 and 4) and the second (Excerpts 5 and 6) interviews, the family took Ben out of the school and the mother began to educate him at home. The second interview (Excerpts 5 and 6), therefore, contains a very “fresh” account constructed just after a dramatic change in Ben's schooling. This account serves to justify the family's decision not to adhere to the education-related IEP and reveals one of the essential features of the IEP: the “existing institution” premise, i.e., it is normal for children to be educated in existing educational institutions. Mrs. T's biographical work required the re-assessment of her narrative strategies to deal with the deep split between her individual sense-making processes and the intersubjective and normative education-related IEP. In her narrative, she reflects on the higher-level implications of the various unique features of the experience, presenting her understanding of it:

**Excerpt 5**

Mrs. T [...] But seriously there then was a culmination. It simply was no longer possible to talk to the headmaster and the English teacher about anything, and everything they said was it was all our fault, that Ben was responsible for everything.

(0.2)

MH Yeah?

Mrs. T Had they made some mistakes or would they make concessions so as to improve something for our child in that school? That wasn't possible.

(0.4)

MH Uh.

Mrs. T They actually didn't want him there. So we said that's just not worth the pain. Ben was in a terrible shape mentally, really.

MH Was it that bad?

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<sup>20</sup>On a scale from one to five, with one being the best mark.

Mrs. T It really was. He was completely destroyed, so much so that he started to wet his bed at night. He like wouldn't show that.

MH Of course but ...

Mrs. T He wouldn't show them that they've broken him, yeah.

MH Yeah.

(0.3)

Mrs. T But, put simply, he was like - you know I was angry at him as well, of course.

MH Oh, but that's really terrible.

Mrs. T I was of course mad at him as well, you know, as I would always be hearing from the school that he had done something. You know, that Ben had been misbehaving again, that Ben had been disturbing the lesson again. I told him: Ben, is this really necessary?

[...]

Mrs. T Everything was just completely wrong, everything.

MH Yeah, that's terrible, I hope ...

Mrs. T Well in the state he was in, he simply hated the teachers. What would have happened if he'd gone to another school?

MH Yeah. (0.8) Well

Mrs. T Because I told myself it would start again. I said to myself no. Was he supposed go from one school to another and find out that they're morons everywhere?

In the first interview (Excerpts 3 and 4) discussed above, Mrs. T tended to consider the conflict situation in terms of the immediate interactions between the English teacher and her son. She recounts this attitude in the second interview (Excerpts 5 and 6), however, she now (Excerpt 5) constructs the situation not as a product of isolated (if reoccurring) interactions but a structural feature of the relationship between the school and her son. At the beginning of her account, she would use the words "headmaster" and "the English teacher" (Excerpt 5, lines 2 and 3, respectively), but later on she would switch to broader categories, such as "they", "that school" or "everything" (Excerpt 5, lines 8 and 13, 9 and 33, respectively). This broader biographical view makes her contest even the IEP itself saying that she has lost trust in the particular school and the teachers involved (Excerpt 5, lines 1–5), and questioning the competence of the educational system as such as far as her son's needs are concerned (Excerpt 5, lines 39–41). In Mrs. T's reinvented narrative strategy, the fact that Ben was systematically categorized as a misbehaving child (Excerpt 5, line 4–5) is associated with a negative trajectory, imposed on him by the school's unwillingness to adjust its view:

**Excerpt 6** Mrs. T And if someone doesn't fit their parameters, (0.8) they then don't want to do anything about that.

According to Schütze, a negative trajectory is a type of biographical experience that limits the individual's influence over his or her own life development and

imposes upon him or her certain conditions, which he or she cannot control (cf. Schütze, 1983, p. 288). When justifying her alternative to the IEP, i.e., educating Ben at home, Mrs. T is actually constructing an account of refusing a negative trajectory. She constructs the IEP as a negative trajectory and the need to refuse it as very urgent as it is related to the experience of the boy's severe psychological hardship described in lines 14–15 and 17–19 (Excerpt 5).

The alternative to the IEP is arrived at in a creative metamorphosis (Schütze, 2007) of Mrs. T's own biographical identity. While initially her narrative was based on conformity with the existing IEP, the transformed biographical identity includes being able (or even having) to create alternatives to the normative premises underpinning the IEP. In the case of Mrs. T, the alternative is a comprehensive replacement of the “existing institution” premise by home schooling. The alternatives presented in the other biographies that we have gathered, are less extensive in that they intend to replace less central elements of the education-related IEP. Typically, it is the premises of “professionals”, i.e., that some matters are normally to be arranged for by trained professionals, that is revisited in the narratives of mothers who were themselves involved in detecting and diagnosing their children's special educational needs. However, such instances of replacement are incorporated to the mothers' narratives within the transformative effect produced by biographical experiences that are commonly constructed as harm to the children.

## 7 Parents' Language Acquisition Policies?

As some of the examples discussed above suggest, the LA management cycle and LAPs play a certain role in the accounts of the decisions about which school to choose (and the potential reassessment of such decisions). The interviews with Mrs. B and Mrs. T (see Excerpt 1 and Excerpt 3, respectively) show, that the LAP relating to foreign language acquisition is referred to in such accounts. This reveals the existence of another premise underpinning the education-related IEP: the “foreign languages” premise suggesting that children are normally to be given the opportunity to learn foreign languages. However, some accounts in our dataset indicated that the prevalent conformity with the “foreign languages” premise is a result of a sense-making process that is more complicated than the passive or unreflected acceptance of a normative discursive resource.

The most extensive account of the LAP implemented by an educational institution was provided in the narrative of Mrs. F<sup>21</sup> who referred to “supporting French” (Excerpt 6, line 4) when describing her sons' school:

**Excerpt 6** Mrs. F It's a French school, it's administered by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it's an institution similar to the Francophonie.<sup>22</sup> It actually inter-

<sup>21</sup> Her husband is from France, their children are: m-7, m-5.

<sup>22</sup> Meaning Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.



nationally supports the French language all over the world, so it's basically similar, you could say. Actually it's not an international organization.

However, at another point Mrs. F made clear that the school is suitable for her family as the graduates should be equally proficient in all the three languages that are taught at the school, i.e., English, Czech and French. In our opinion, this seeming inconsistency implies that she expects her aspirations related to LA to be realisable within the framework defined by the school's LAP. Similarly, Mrs. T's expectation that her son would be able to benefit from early English instruction, provided under the school's LAP, was not fully compliant with the actual LAP, which was designed for pupils with no competence in English. The narrative implies that the family had expected to be able to execute their educational plan<sup>23</sup> under this LAP, which proved wrong in the end. Both examples suggest that parents also develop some sort of a relatively elaborate LAPs distinct from the LAPs implemented by the educational institutions concerned. Despite this, the mothers are able to refer to their LAPs in compliance with the normative discursive resources.

One discursive resource present in the accounts of school enrolment has so far gone unmentioned in this paper. It is the "parent" premise, i.e., that it is normal for parents to be responsible for their children's education. The "parent" premise is actually the most essential requirement for the accountability of the narratives analysed here. Our respondents consider themselves (co-)eligible or (co-)responsible for shaping their children's education and construct their biographical accounts accordingly. Arguably, this would not be the case, for instance, in societies where all such decisions are taken by males or where individual educational trajectories are determined just by social status.

When respondents adopt the biographical identity of parents, they tend to more or less systematically draw on two normative principles (cf. Schütze, 2007) to justify the account of their own activities. Firstly, mothers attribute some of their actions to their effort to avoid and minimize what they consider harmful to their children. Secondly, mothers referred to providing their children with the opportunities to maximize their competitive advantages as a longer-term perspective goal.

We believe that these discursive resources are also relevant for the accounts related to children's education.<sup>24</sup> By looking at the narrative strategies and discursive resources, used in the accounts of school enrolment, in combination with the more general normative principles, related to the biographical identity of a parent, the nature of the parents' LAPs can be understood in a wider context: The premise of "foreign languages" can be applied, as it complies with the plan to further develop children's plurilingualism in order to maximize their competitive advantage.

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<sup>23</sup> It is also worth noting that the reinvented home-schooling curriculum actually further developed this aspect. The family has decided to teach their son not just the required English curriculum contents for the given school year but to prepare him for an international certificate examination.

<sup>24</sup> However, the accounts of school enrolment are potentially relevant also with regards to the other biographical identities of our respondents. Especially the decision about when children should be enrolled in an educational institution at pre-school level is closely related to mothers as professionals.

As the case of Mrs. T shows, the first principle is a more intensive narrative impulse than the second one. Accounts where the second principle became activated were to a greater extent based on the education-related IEP. However, biographical accounts where mothers apply the first principle tend to be more elaborate and more creative as these accounts cannot depart from the discursive resources available within the IEP. Unlike the other discursive resources, the first normative principle was never reinvented or even contested. We believe that the children's well-being is at the centre of the "parenting agenda". Attitudes that could perhaps be described as the "parents' LAPs" are, therefore, in our view best regarded as a part of the more holistic concept of "parenting policies".

## 8 Conclusion

Our paper aimed to contribute to the understanding of the micro-macro interplay of the LA management cycle, perpetuated by the state LAP. It examined the interplay from an emic perspective, departing from the assumption that, in the Czech Republic, it is the parents, entitled to decide about their children's education, who play a key role in that interplay. It investigated biographical accounts of mothers of children with plurilingual family background to find out how they make sense of their experience with the LA management cycle. In order to reconstruct the sense-making processes of the mothers, our paper focused on analysing their discursive resources and narrative strategies.

The sense-making processes reconstructed from our data do not represent events "as they really happened". However, this does not make the inquiry less relevant. Knowing how individuals make sense of their life experience can help us understand why, under given conditions, they think they acted in a certain way. In our view, strategies used by individuals to cope with social reality cannot be properly understood without considering the individuals' perceptions of the reality and their accounts of motivation.

Our analysis yielded three findings. The first two relate to the immediate social context of our research, while the third is of importance for the FLP research in general.

Firstly, our data suggest that our respondents base their narratives on several premises (some of them are the "foreign languages", "closest school", "professionals" and "parents" premises) and that they regard these premises, which are related to their children's education and especially to the school enrolment process, as intersubjective (common) knowledge. The existence of these premises seems to confirm that the LA management cycle perpetuated by the state LAP is part of our respondents' life experience. The mothers construct accounts of some of their activities in terms of the adjustment designs put forward by the actors on the cycle's macro level. The "foreign languages" premise corresponds directly to the adjustment design under the state LAP promoting pupils' controlled plurilingualism and the "parents" and "professionals" premises with the roles assigned to parents and

professionals, respectively, by the state LAP. The “closest school” premise seems to concern particular educational institutions rather than aspects of education in general. It is, however, based on the idea that there is no difference between individual public schools except for their location. In other words, all schools within the educational system provide the same education, i.e., implement the same adjustment designs in the context of the LA management cycle.

Secondly, our data seem to confirm the theoretical assumption that some discursive resources, such as the premises described above, are seen as normative by nature because as they depart from the IEP that itself is normative. When an individual experience described in the narrative was constructed as not complying with the IEP, special narrative strategies, including argumentation and justification, had to be used.

These special narrative strategies, requiring more intensive narrative work, seem to be used to introduce alternative discursive resources but also a higher level of reflexivity as far as mothers’ individual experience is concerned. The increased reflexivity also concerns the IEP. For certain reported biographical experiences, the respondents would not perceive the IEP as a suitable sense-making device, which triggered a transformation of their narrative strategies. The most essential feature of this transformation seems to be a creative metamorphosis of the biographical identity of the mother involved. The biographical identity was reinvented so as to include not only playing the role assigned to her in the context of the IEP, but also the possibility (or even obligation) to come up with more or less comprehensive alternatives.

Thirdly, our research suggests that the accounts of school enrolment seem to be based on a certain awareness of the LAP promoted by specific educational institutions and the assumption that the families’ goals can be achieved within the LAP’s framework. This suggests that families do not simply conform to existing LAPs. Instead, they tend to design their own more or less elaborate LAPs. However, the language-related agenda is only a part of a more holistic concept – the parenting policy. The chief concern and the basis of parenting policies is children’s well-being. The children’s overall well-being is more important to families than issues related specifically to language acquisition, which is a factor that needs to be considered both in FLP research and when designing LAPs.

Our paper is situated in a context where children with plurilingual family background represent a challenge for the essentially monolingual dominant language ideologies and the related state LAP. The results of our analysis suggest that the narratives of our respondents seem to reproduce the dominant attitudes, which are part and parcel of the discursive resources they draw on when talking about their life experience. However, this sometimes seems to result from the application of comprehensive sense-making processes. Moreover, the conformity with the dominant discursive resources cannot be sustained throughout the narrative, and the narrative strategies employed to deal with this fact include the reinvention of the role that the mothers were assigned within the IEP. In the course of such creative metamorphoses, some mothers also reinvent their attitudes to the state LAP. Mothers, who are supposed to be passive “implementers” of the LAP, thus turn into their active and critical “creators”.

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# Language Policy in a Multilingual Crèche in France: How Is Language Policy Linked to Language Acquisition Beliefs?



Eloise Caporal-Ebersold

**Abstract** This language policy (LP) research focuses on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), a very rich research context, yet at the moment under-researched in terms of LP studies. Based on an English-French bilingual crèche in Strasbourg, this article aims to examine the link between the language policy choice(s) of parents, the language practices of professionals, and their language acquisition beliefs. Guided by Spolsky’s LP conceptualization, which was later expanded by Bonacina, I look closely into the “declared language policy”, “practiced language policy”, and “perceived language policy” of the crèche. To gather data, I employed an ethnographic, case study approach over nine months. Data collection included audiotaped interviews, observation of language use for more than 110 hours, photos, and field notes. This article shows that the explicit language policy in this case, marked by the crèche’s official declaration of the One Professional – One Language (OPOL) policy, and the implicit language choices of the parents and professionals in this ECEC setting are informed by their beliefs about language, more specifically their language acquisition beliefs. Furthermore, it reveals that there is a clear connection between discourses and beliefs. OPOL is still widely used and accepted because it is a well-known strategy. In fact, there is a long tradition of use in families and schools. OPOL “seems to simplify” the complicated multilingual reality, but it cannot be implemented all the time and in all situations at the crèche. Finally, this article illustrates that even if ECEC structures are different from school, ideologies of language are all pervasive.

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## 1 Introduction

Although studies in language education policy (LEP) have flourished in recent years, researches focusing on early childhood education and care (ECEC), an intermediary space between home and compulsory school, are just gaining momentum. Recently, the political and educational discourse in ECEC have changed following OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) recommendation. Indeed, it was only in 2014 that the European Commission released a document known as "Key Principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care." The framework does not explicitly discuss language education or language policy, but it clearly points out that ECEC is considered a fundamental key towards children's educational achievement and personal growth. Researchers emphasize the significant impact of high quality ECEC on young children's social and cognitive development, which consequently could better prepare them for further academic success (Lazzari & Vanderbroeck, 2012). Following these developments, policy makers at the European level are taking strides in improving quality ECEC services (COM: 2011, 66 final). I would like to show in this chapter how language policy research in an ECEC setting could inform policy makers' decisions and efforts.

Since ECEC structures cater to very young children, in fact two month-old babies in France, the issue of language acquisition could not be left aside. With the growing multilingualism of children attending ECEC structures around Europe, a central question needs to be addressed, should these structures aim to prepare children for schooling thus focus on the national language, or should they be informed by research (Paradis, Genesee, & Brago, 2011; Thomas & Coller, 1997) that has shown over the past 40 years the importance of supporting home languages for identity development and better language acquisition of a dominant language? As more and more multilingual structures open, another question that arises is the desire of many parents to see their children learn a foreign language early on.

This paper will not focus on language acquisition per se but on language policy choices in a bilingual English-French crèche in Alsace, France, and how these choices are based mostly on beliefs on language acquisition. It should also be explained that the crèche under study is the first English–French crèche in the city of Strasbourg which policy is to support French and German rather than English. In addition, it has to be emphasized that although the crèche declares itself bilingual, in fact, it is multilingual with parents speaking many different languages other than French. In view of the complexity of the language situation, an ethnographic study of the language policy and practices (LPP) was conducted in this structure over nine

months. In this article, I will focus more specifically on how the language acquisition beliefs of the parents and professionals informed the declared language policy of the crèche. These beliefs were gathered and analysed from the interviews of parents and professionals.

### ***1.1 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): An Under Researched Context in Language Policy***

In the last decades, language policy has become a very dynamic research field, conceptualized from varied points of view and studied in diverse contexts. Researchers are interested in understanding the relationships between society, politics, economics, religion, education and enacted language policies (Baker, 2002; Bonacina-Pugh, 2012; Hornberger, 2006; Johnson, 2009; Patten, 2001; Ricento, 2006; Shohamy, 2006a; Spolsky, 2004, 2007, 2008). As explained by Shohamy (2006), this could be attributed to the inherent nature of language as an effective tool in propagating political, ideological, social, and economic agendas.

Considering the divergent issues in language policy and planning (LPP), Cooper (1989) believed that it was impossible to come up with a model that would capture the intricate concerns of LPP. More recently, Ricento (2006) claimed that although language policy studies have grown, the absence of an all-encompassing theory in LPP could cause complex concerns in examining either macro or micro cases. Thus, he insisted on the importance of conducting studies at the micro level, because looking at specific cases in a given society can yield grounded theories on a “smaller scope”. Moreover, Johnson (2013) is concerned that empirical data collection in language policy studies was lacking compared to its theoretical and conceptual dynamism. He supported efforts to examine micro-level policy studies that use discourses and texts on potential research areas, which have not been studied from the LP point of view. He envisaged such studies to investigate the motivations behind explicit or implicit, overt or covert, de facto or de jure, top-down or bottom up language policies (Johnson, 2013).

Researches in language policy (LP) have examined wide-ranging phenomena from global to national, and local contexts. Language policy has been explored alongside societal and economic issues. More concretely, Gazzola and Wickström (2016) volume examined the ramifications of language diversity on economy by gathering data from various countries. Education, considered by many to be at the core of nation building, is a major field of interest for the study of LP at all levels. However, one context seems to have been under researched, the setting of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). In most countries in Europe, ECEC caters to children outside compulsory schooling. For a long time, the focus of such structures was on care rather than education and the perceived homogeneity of societies such as France for example did not lead to issues of language choice. Another reason could be the split system in place in many countries where children under age 3



are not the responsibility of Ministries of education. (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014). This means that different ministries are responsible for the two age groups, namely the 0–3 and the 3–6 year olds. These two groups of children are regarded differently in terms of services, policies and priorities.

At present, interestingly, a number of studies have analysed LP in structures catering for children aged 3–6. For younger children, research has focused on language acquisition in bi or multilingual settings and the strategies used by parents to pass on more than one language to their children (De Houwer, 2009; Fantini, 1985; Leopold, 1949; Saunders, 1988). Today, these strategies are studied in terms of family language policies, also an emerging field (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008; King & Fogle, 2013; Schwartz, 2008). They take into account the complex multilingual situations parents live in and their choices of languages to speak with their children. My research has taken place outside the family context with children age 0–3 in an institutional setting where language interactions are different from those in the family setting. I wish to argue that LP studies within these ECEC structures are needed if the language development of young children outside of the home is to be understood and supported in the case of bi- or multilingual acquisition. Moreover, studies of this nature have wide-ranging impact in the broader context of education.

To effectively understand the link between language policy and language acquisition within an ECEC structure one must pay attention to both interactions between carers and children and to children's reactions or productions when they are old enough. However studying the language development of very young children in a crèche demands parents' agreement and strict ethical rules to be followed. My study focused mainly on LPP in the crèche and on observing their implementation in everyday interactions. The data gathered on language acquisition came from the discourses of parents and carers on the best way to support the two or more languages of the children's repertoires.

## ***1.2 Language Acquisition and Language Policy in ECEC***

As stated earlier, most studies on young children in the family or in collective settings are aimed towards understanding the language acquisition processes (Thompson, 2000). Although I do not discount the relevance of language acquisition studies, this chapter claims that language policy researches in ECEC structures are essential in multilingual settings where more than one language need to be managed. Examining social and political aspects in contexts where language acquisition processes occur away from parents will inform them as well as professionals and policy makers on the most favourable conditions for multilingual children's language development.

In this article, I shall focus on a parental bilingual English-French crèche in Strasbourg that caters to children from 0 to 3 years of age. During the conceptual-

ization stage of this project, the project manager identified the One Person-One Language (OPOL) as the centre's language policy. It is clear from the discourses of parents and professionals that this language policy was deliberately chosen as a strategy designed to facilitate young children's efficient bilingual language acquisition. In other words, their choice of policy was the result of a reflection of the most efficient way to ensure enough input in both languages, thus successful bilingual language acquisition. The following questions will be addressed in the next parts of the chapter: (1) How does a bilingual early childhood education and care (ECEC) structure work from the point of view of language policy and practices as it embraces the many languages of the multilingual families as well as the two languages of the declared policy of the crèche? (2) What is the declared language policy of this crèche and why these two languages? (3) How is the policy implemented by the professionals in the crèche and by the parents when they are there? (4) Finally, what does the declared language policy say about the language acquisition beliefs of the parents and the professionals in the crèche?

## 2 Understanding the French ECEC Setting

To situate the context of this study, I will briefly present the distinct childcare features in France. ECEC has a long tradition in France: it started as early as the 1830s. The "care aspect" was primarily the focus at that time, and it has evolved into a more holistic approach recently, with equal emphasis on its educational aspect. In France, early childhood education services cover children from 0–6, before compulsory school age. As the country applies the so-called "split system," the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, and Women's Rights (le ministère des affaires sociales, de la santé, et des droits des femmes), the National Family Allowance Fund (la *Caisse nationale des allocations familiales*, CNAF) with the Department Family Allowance Fund (Caisses des allocations familiales, CAF) oversee the services of the younger age group, (0–3). On the other hand, the Ministry of Education (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche) is responsible for the older age group (3–6). Another important agency is responsible for licensing and monitoring these services, The Child and Maternal Health Services (protection maternelle et infantile, PMI). Before an ECEC structure is given the legal permission to operate, PMI ascertains that the place and the services conform to ECEC standard requirements and specifications.

Early childhood education and care is at the heart of French family policies, and its services are institutionalised. As stipulated clearly in official documents, the country's primary goals in providing ECEC services is for parents to be able to balance professional life with family life and to provide options to parents regarding childcare. Thus, family and childcare services include three components, namely: infant protection, childcare services, and the distribution and payment of family allowances.

The governmental agencies responsible for ECEC have put in place a wide range of ECEC options for parents. Families can choose from an array of alternatives depending on their specific needs and specific employment situations. The table below summarizes the services for children aged, 0–3.

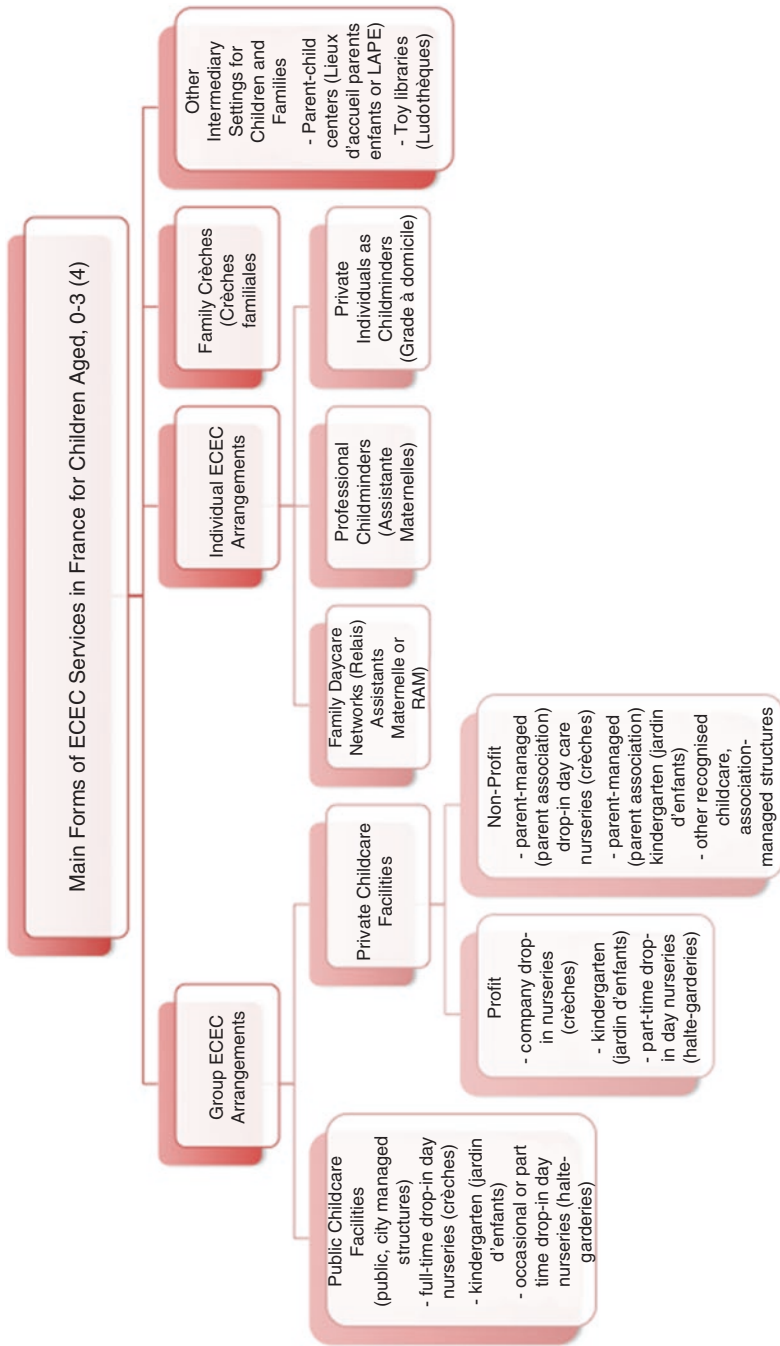
Figure 1 clearly shows the wide range of childcare services available in France. It has to be mentioned that all day care facilities receive financial funding from national and local government agencies. Both public and private ECEC structures undergo licensing procedures. The difference lies on the entity that manages the structure. In public ECEC structures, the municipality manages and therefore the workers are government employees. In the case of private childcare settings, an association or a business enterprise manages it.

The characteristics and features of these childcare options vary. For parents who choose to put their child in a centre or to be taken cared of by a professional child minder, monthly payment is calculated according to their salary or what is known as “Quotient Familial.” This system makes the service affordable even to low-income family.

## ***2.1 Multilingualism in French ECEC Structures***

With regards to the question of language, France is traditionally viewed as a monolingual polity. (Costa & Lambert, 2009; Spolsky, 2004). As overtly stipulated in the Article 2 of the Constitution, French is the official language of France. However, at present it is becoming more difficult to consider France as a monolingual society (Ager, 1999). Endogenous factors as well as exogenous linguistic variety due to immigration have contributed to the country’s linguistic diversity. In the report published by Cerquiglini (1999) on the linguistic situation in France, 70 other languages of France other than French were listed, which he refers to as “les langues de France”. There has always been a lot of immigration towards France throughout the twentieth century, but it is only recently that multilingualism has been acknowledged as a feature of French society. Therefore, ECEC structures are frequented more and more by multilingual families who want their children to retain their linguistic and cultural heritage as well as learn French. This multilingual aspect is the reality of ECEC structures. Therefore, from the point-of-view of research on language acquisition, it would be interesting to study how bi/multilingual children acquire language(s) in “monolingual, French-only crèches” and how quickly they forget their home language as in the study by Thompson in the UK, and whether bi/multilingual crèches support bilingual language acquisition first developed in the home context. In other words, do children have the same language experiences at home and in the crèche or is there a break in language input that changes the linguistic environment of the children?

Presently, “bilingual” crèches in France are growing. For example, at present, there are at least 32 crèches including the following languages: French-English, French-German, French-Italian, French-Mandarin, French-Béarnais, French-Eng-



**Fig. 1** ECEC Services Options for Children Between 0–3 years old

Spanish, French-German-Spanish-Eng (<http://www.creche-bilingue.info/liste/>). It should be emphasized though that many of these crèches are private or parent-initiated structures. Only a few of them that are managed by municipalities.

## 2.2 *Multilingualism in the ECEC Structures of Strasbourg*

Strasbourg is a French city situated on the border with Germany. In a previous study, we analysed its language and cultural diversity in various spheres (Caporal-Ebersold, Hélot, & Young, 2013). Concretely, the city's linguistic diversity can be attributed to the following significant factors: historical and political background, strategic location, language policy, and the role or image the city hopes to project in present-day France. As a city, it is home to a number of prestigious European institutions, considerable number of international companies and the largest university in France. With a growing number of immigrants calling it their home, the city government has overt and covert language policies (Shohamy, 2006) to manage multilingualism, but the border context with Germany has given a declared priority to German. In ECEC, the declared language policy of Strasbourg is as follows: (1) all children are welcomed irrespective of their first language, racial or cultural background, but the language of interaction is French, (2) German and more recently English are supported and promoted.

With a population of 272,222 in 2014, Strasbourg has 66 collective, city-managed crèches and 25 private, association-managed crèches for a total of 3100 places. The city has three bilingual crèches: two German-French crèches and one English-French crèche. One of the German-French crèches is a private, association-managed crèche. The other one, which recently opened, is a joint venture of the cities of Strasbourg and Kehl (city in Germany, close to the French border).

As far as policy is concerned for ECEC structures, Strasbourg is one of a few French cities that initiated the publication of a quality charter (Strasbourg, 2011). This charter articulates the city's goal to ensure its commitment towards consistent, quality service in all crèches. It covers nine essential components based on child-centred approach. However, it has to be emphasized that the charter at this stage does not include a statement about children's languages, language acquisition or language development. Does this omission imply that language is a given in the singular, i.e., French is the language to be used with all children and it is so obvious that it does not need to be mentioned? Or as Shohamy (2006) explains no language policy is indeed a covert policy implemented in such a way that it cannot be challenged?

### 3 The Case Study of the French-English Bilingual Crèche

This research focuses on the implementation of bilingual policy in the first parental English-French bilingual crèche in Strasbourg, France, which opened in June 2013. It is a non-profit childcare structure, managed by an association of parents. The project manager, who eventually became the association president, founded the crèche based on the principle of “openness to languages and different cultures” (P1 I1, 26 August 2013). Her personal experiences of multilingualism inspired its foundational tenets. As a British-Canadian, who was raised in the United States, she migrated to France in her early 20s. She conceptualized and established the crèche, while raising bilingual children. Her commitment to the project was unwavering. It took her seven years to establish the crèche.

It has to be clarified that although this ECEC structure had other programs such as Montessori practices, it was the bilingual project that motivated most parents to enrol their children. For transnational couples for which English was their common language, a bilingual English-French crèche offered the best opportunities for their children, thus the presence of English was definitely the main reason for their choice. As one parent succinctly revealed, “We wanted him to go somewhere where he could speak English, or at least some English” (P1 I1, 26 August 2013). The same is true with the parent quoted below. Although she can communicate with the professionals in French, she felt more at ease knowing that she could speak with them in English.

First the fact that they talked both languages made me feel more comfortable, you know, knowing that I can also speak in English, if necessary, you know. It always makes me feel more confident, you know even if I do talk in French, you know, but English is better... (P1 I3, 6 June 2014)

The parents in this structure played a vital role in its day-to-day operation. It has to be emphasised that the parent association was the legal backbone of the crèche. It was the entity recognised by the state. Thus, the parents enacted policies of the crèche and hired professionals or employees in conformity with the legal guidelines provided by the Ministry of Health, CAF, PMI and the city. To ascertain the daily functioning of the crèche, parents invested in the life of the crèche, served half day a week and took charge of a specific responsibility. These assigned tasks or “commissions” included accounting work, menu preparation, serving on the recruitment committee, serving on the translation committee, etc. Since this was the first English-French bilingual crèche in Strasbourg, there was high demand for a place. In 2013, there were only 13 places while in 2014, 20 places were on offer.

Although English and French were the official languages of the crèche, there were at least 13 languages spoken by parents and professionals: Arabic, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, and Spanish. As clearly stipulated in the documents the bilingual strategy of the crèche is the One Person One Language approach, which will be discussed extensively in a section below.

### ***3.1 Understanding Multilingualism in the Crèche***

During the course of the study, which lasted from September 2013 to June 2014, 13 children from 3 months to 3 years old regularly attended the crèche while 5 children between 3 and 4 attended the crèche on Wednesdays only. There were 27 parents with two of them working full-time in the crèche.

Using the ethnographic research approach, I observed eight people: four permanent professionals, one part-time employee, two substitute professionals, and the association president, who was present on a daily basis. These individuals held clearly defined work descriptions and language assignments. During the nine-month period, two professionals went on maternity leave at different time periods. They were replaced for several months. The substitute professionals were given language assignments based on the assignments of the professionals who were on leave. Below is the breakdown of the worker's assigned languages. Thus, the management of the two languages was clearly organised by assigning each language to different persons.

#### **3.1.1 Linguistic Repertoires of Parents**

Despite the policy of the crèche focusing on the management of bilingualism, the linguistic reality of the families concerned was multilingual as can be argued when one looks at their repertoires. The table below clearly shows the multilingual dimension of the crèche (Table 1).

#### **3.1.2 Language Repertoires of Professionals**

Similar to the parents' case, all the professionals speak two or more languages. None could be considered monolingual. This is clearly illustrated in the table that follows Table 2.

All staff members except Carer D speak English and French. This means seven professionals could have been assigned to speak either language as they can switch back and forth to English and French. However, this possible code switching was what they intentionally avoided by putting in place a language policy that they believed should be strictly enforced. It is also noteworthy to mention that two professionals assigned to French were "non-native speakers" of the language. In fact, the first language of Carer B was Polish. On the other hand, Carer C's first language was Arabic, but both were fluent speakers of French.

**Table 1** Linguistic repertoires of parents

Parent code	Nationality	Language	Partner's code	Partner's nationality	Partners languages	Home language
1	French	French, Hebrew, English Portuguese Turkish	2	French	French Hebrew Spanish English Italian	French Hebrew for terms of endearment
3	French	French English	4 (Father of her child)	American	English	French (sing songs in English)
5	Greek	Greek English French	6	American	English Some notion of French	English
7	French	French English	8	French	French English	French
9	French	French English	10	Canadian French	English French	French
11	British	English French	12	French	French English	English French
13	British	English	14	British	English	English
15	Algerian	Arabic French English	16	Algerian French	Arabic French	Arabic French
17	French	French English	18	Indian-French	English Punjabi Hindi French	French (some English)
19	French	French English	20	New Zealander	English	French English (when husband is around)
21	British	English Spanish French	22	Finnish	Finnish English	English Finnish (mother to child)
23	French	French English	24	French	French English Spanish	French Some English
25	French	French English	26	French	French English	French
27	American - French	English French Spanish	28	French	French English	French English



**Table 2** Linguistic repertoires of professionals

Worker	Nationality	Languages	Assigned Language
Association president (who served as cook and reliever)	British-Canadian	English French	English
Carer A (Full-time), Educational director	British	English French	English
Carer B (full-time), associate education director	Polish	Polish French English	French
Carer C (Full-time), In-charge of the smaller children and babies	Algerian	French Arabic English	French
Carer D (Full-time), In-charge of the smaller children and babies	French-Algerian	French Arabic	French
Carer E (Part-time), In-charge of the bigger children	Canadian	English French	English
Carer F, (Substitute)	French-Algerian	French Arabic English	French
Carer G, (Substitute)	Irish	English French	English

### 3.2 *Negotiating Languages in a Multilingual Crèche*

All parents were either bilingual or multilingual. For most of them, English and French were the two main languages practiced on a daily basis. What needs to be clarified is that they did not have language assignments. In other words, the One Person One Language (OPOL) policy did not apply to them. The policy of the crèche only applied to the workers and not to the parents when they were present in the crèche. They were allowed to speak to their children in their home language, and they were given the freedom to choose any language they were comfortable in when interacting with the rest of the children or when conversing with other parents. However, their communicative exchanges with professionals were more complicated. Language use depended on the professional's language competence and the parents' language repertoire although most parents spoke with the professionals using the latter's assigned language. This seemed to be their manner of showing their support to the chosen language policy strategy of the crèche and to the professionals who were maintaining the language policy. However, if the parent could not speak the assigned language of the professional, the latter switched to accommodate the parent's language. In the event that the professional did not speak the language of the parent, the parent adjusted to the language that the staff was proficient with. The point that has to be stressed here is that there were a lot of negotiations regarding language use because of the multilingualism of families on one part and the bilingual policy of the crèche on the other hand.

Since this crèche was a parent-initiated project, two general parental motivations were observable. For some parents, this setting served as a venue to reinforce the family's home language(s). For bilingual families who used OPOL in their homes and employed English and French daily, the crèche became another space of language exposure consistent with their own choices of language policy in their homes so that their children did not experience any break from one space to another. For another group of parents, the bilingual nature of the crèche appealed to their intention to introduce a second language to their children at a very young age for varied reasons. As one French father clearly articulated, "...maybe in the future we might go to an English-speaking country...so that has always been a project for me...so that she is prepared in case" (Parent 5, 30 May 2014). For this parent, introducing English to his child will facilitate an easy integration to an English-speaking country in the event that they will immigrate.

Indeed, the language policy was not imposed on parents because of the crèche's attempt to accommodate all the language needs and goals of the different kinds of families they were serving.

### 3.3 *Research Methodology*

This article is based on a qualitative, longitudinal research that employed an ethnographic approach (Conteh, Kearney, & Mor-Sommerfeld, 2005; Heller, 2008; McCarthy, 2011). Physical site visits and observations were done at least twice a week from September 2013 to June 2014 for a total of 110 hours during the crèche's first year of operation. There were 24 audio-recorded interviews, which lasted between 30 min to 1 and a half hours each; 45 sessions were recorded. Field notes and photos were taken throughout the nine-month observation period.

To understand the choices of languages implemented in the crèche, I used Spolsky's language policy definition (2004, 2007). Expanded by Bonacina (2012), it is known as the "Three Conceptualizations of LP" namely: Declared language policy, which is a concept proposed by Shohamy (2006, p. 68) to refer to the LP found in the management decisions of a community; Practiced language policy, LP found in language practice (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012), specifically to language pattern and language choice patterns (Spolsky, 2007, p. 4); Perceived language policy, used to refer to the LP found in beliefs and ideologies. To study the link between the different agents, we ascribed to Johnson's (2009, 2011) definition that Language Policy and Planning, which he describes as is multi-layered. This means that there are language policy processes happening at different levels (Hornberger, 2006; Ricento, 2006). The agency aspects were also considered to have a much more holistic view of the entire LPP process.

For this chapter, I carefully selected the excerpts of interviews that reflected the language beliefs of the parents and professionals. More specifically, these extracts focused on the general language ideologies on language acquisition and learning, bilingualism and the English language. The discourses were analysed by themes by

examining key words and recurring ideas. It was not the goal of this research to criticize the language policy and its implementation but rather to understand and identify the ideological issues and to examine the implications of their choice (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011; Jaffe, 2011).

## **4 Analysis: Link Between Language Policy and Language Beliefs**

In this section, I examined the relationship between the crèche's language policy and the language acquisition beliefs of some of the parents and professionals. My analysis was based on the following hypotheses: their decision to employ a clearly defined language policy is based on their understanding of how language is acquired and learned; and that the setting they created was based on what they believe could provide the best conditions for young children to thrive in both English and French.

### **4.1 The Language Policy: One Person One Language (OPOL)**

Although OPOL is a very familiar acronym that stands for One Person, One Language, it has different variants depending on the context of its use. In the family context, OPOL stands for One Parent, One Language, which is used interchangeably with One Person, One Language or One Adult, One Language. In public ECEC structures such as crèches or playgroups, it could also mean One Professional, One Language.

Regardless of the context of where the OPOL policy is employed, the principle is the same - that children should clearly ascribe one person to one language. This approach was first attributed to the language practice of Jules Ronjat, a French linguist with a German wife. He was advised by his colleague Maurice Grammont in 1902 on how to raise his child bilingually. From then on, this choice of language management has become the most well known and widely practiced in homes and in schools. This policy is based on a monolingual vision of bilingualism. It is seen as preventing language mixing, as it is easier for the children to distinguish one language from the other.

The English-French crèche identified OPOL as its language policy. The association president with some parents conceptualized the project following the examples of other bilingual child centres where OPOL was also the chosen policy. Because some of them had first hand experience of the policy in other ECEC structures or in their homes, OPOL seemed to be a feasible choice.

In the first interview conducted with the association president, she mentioned the role that the English-French playgroup (another bilingual structure in STG) played in their decision to adopt OPOL.

Yup! It's the same thing, one adult one language. So we are trying to keep it so the child knows when they are speaking to someone, they have, that person, only responds to them in that language. I think it helps in recognition because the kids are looking for stability.... (P1 I1, 26 August 2013)

By saying, "Yup! It's the same thing, one adult one language," the association president affirmed that they are following the language policy of another bilingual structure and not introducing a novel approach to bilingualism. They chose a strategy that had worked for another ECEC structure. Moreover, this response also reflected her certainty that this strategy would be the best route in managing the two languages. The next sentence contained the word, "trying." This somehow showed a clear effort for the implementers of the policy. OPOL was not natural for most of them who were fluent in both English and French and who were used to adjusting their language depending on their interlocutors. However, with the children's best interest in mind, they were obliged to maintain their assigned languages.

The last part of this discourse clearly justified the reason for their choice. She believed that maintaining one adult one language would be beneficial for the children because it ensured sufficient language input in both languages. Moreover, she considered that this language phenomenon provided a stable language environment for the children because the adults served as language referents. The belief that children need stability for effective acquisition and learning of languages was evident in this discourse. Thus, one may ask the following pertinent questions: Do children need languages to be separated for stability? Is the policy artificial, taking into account the fact that bilingual professionals were restricted to one language as they interact with children? Clearly, this strategy was chosen with the goal of providing children exposure to two languages, getting the vocabulary in both language and eventually acquiring two languages.

The project itself is (...) definitely very strong with me. So I put this idea forth to the other members, the other founding members, who are bilingual with their own families, use the same practice. They are speaking their own language whether Russian or German to their children. So it wasn't hard to kind of convince them. They weren't experts so they weren't able to say...yah, yah we are definitely going to have to do it like this. I spoke with crèche A (German-French) to see how they worked. Obviously being at nursery (A) (English-French), I saw how it worked.... The team was hired on that basis... When we met them, it was explained that that was what we wanted to do. It wasn't, what do you think or there is an option or should we change it." (P1 I3, 16 June 2014)

The language policy and planning (LPP) process of the crèche was straightforward. There were no negotiations or discussions as to other options since parents were seen as non-experts and the power of the crèche president gave credibility to her policy choices. The fact that parents used the same strategy at home was also a convincing factor.

The statement, "I spoke with crèche A (German-French) to see how they worked," showed that the association president was part of a network of bilingual language practitioners working with very young children. The decision to embrace OPOL was informed by the practices and positive testimonies of professionals and parents from other bilingual structures in the city. The existing language policy model pro-

vided of a bilingual French-German crèche and a bilingual English-French nursery became the basis for this crèche. Therefore, during the time that the decision needed to be made regarding language management, OPOL was the only available model. There was no alternative policy. The model provided by other bilingual structures seemed to point to the effectiveness of OPOL.

What about the professionals? What role did they have in the LPP process? It should be stated clearly that the professionals did not take part in language planning.

...it seems to make just sense that somebody whose a native speaker of English would speak English in the crèche, and somebody whose a French speaker would speak French in the crèche...The team was hired on that basis so when we met the former president (name omitted)...we met (name omitted) to hire her and (name omitted), when we met them, it was explained that that was what we wanted to do. It wasn't what do you think or there is an option or should we change it. (P1 I3, 16 June 2014)

Clearly, the language policy was already identified even before the hiring process. In fact, the staff members were hired based on their commitment to support the identified bilingual strategy. They were considered as the executors of the declared language policy. This role was clearly specified in their job description: that they would serve as the language referents and would model the use of either English or French. However, it was apparent that there were some situations that call for a more lenient and flexible language use to ascertain the smooth functioning of the crèche.

## 4.2 *OPOL as a Declared Language Policy*

“Declared language policies” are approaches or strategies identified to manage the languages in a community (Shohamy, 2006). In this bilingual crèche, OPOL was the declared policy imposed to professionals. Each professional was identified with a language to speak with the children and was expected to represent a model of monolingual language practice for the children. It is expected that this person served as the model of the assigned language and maintained it in her interactions with children. Within this framework, the association president was recognized as English speaker although she was bilingual in English and French. In the excerpt below, she explained how she practiced the said policy.

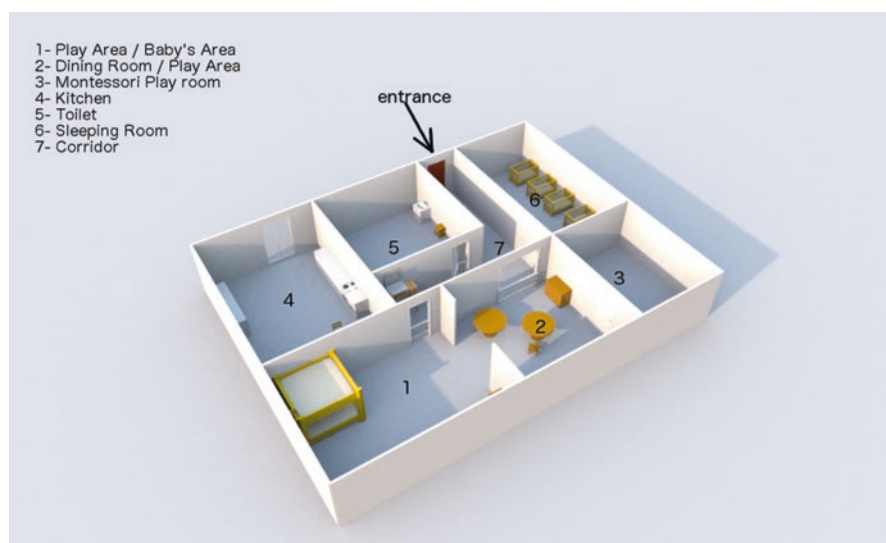
In this structure, I never say a word of French. It is almost a game that we play because for instance, we have a delivery at the door, and then I say, hello, how are you? And then, they'll say une livraison, and blah...blah... blah. And then, I'll say thank you, thank you very much. They look at me and sometimes I say, yeah... we are an English-speaking crèche.

Most of the people, even the deliverer has a little bit of English. They might find it odd. Otherwise, I go outside of the door. I invite them in the kitchen, and then I shut the door. So this kitchen space, when there are no children in it is the space where the professional or the team members can speak French.” (P1 I1 26 August 2013).

This excerpt gives a very good example of the impact on language practices of the strict application of the OPOL policy. Although in this case, the association president was not addressing the children but an outsider, who was obviously a French speaker, she kept her rule of English only. Thus, she continued in the monolingual mode (Grosjean, 2010) of communication but in this case used a language that the outsider did not speak. When she added, “it is almost a game we play,” she was including the children in her mode of communication rather than modelling for them the bilingual mode of communication, which was used by bilinguals sharing the same language. Also, it showed that this was not how she would have reacted under ordinary circumstances. The strict separation of languages prevented her from reverting to her usual way of handling her own bilingualism. While she perfectly understood her French interlocutor and could answer in the said language, she persisted in English and justified by saying, “we are an English speaking crèche.”

Interestingly, the above quote also refers to policy. We reproduce the floor plan below in order to illustrate our point Fig. 2. The use of the term “free space” for the kitchen meant other spaces were not free. The constraints of OPOL must be accepted.

The staff members, including the president, were expected to speak their assigned languages in all of the six areas of the crèche except the kitchen, which was Room 4. This meant that OPOL was strictly enforced in all the spaces of the crèche except the “free space” with the added condition, “...when there are no children.” It is in the kitchen where professionals were allowed to exercise their full language repertoire. It is in this space where English-assigned carers, who were in fact English-French bilinguals, could speak to their colleagues in French to clarify children’s



**Fig. 2** Floor plan of the Bilingual English-French Crèche

concerns. In other words, it was decided at one point among the professionals that OPOL was not feasible in all spaces, and that one space had to remain “free”. This illustrates the fact that LP in a structure like a crèche has to be negotiated for one reason or another, here no doubt, better communication. It also shows that LP cannot be understood out of context, and that the context will influence its implementation.

Moreover, parents also supported the language policy of the crèche. The excerpt below is taken from an interview I conducted with a Greek mother, who was in Strasbourg for her third post-doctoral position. Both she and her American husband, who was based in Paris at the moment of the interview, were researchers. They met in London as post-doctoral students, and so the first language of contact was English. With regards to their preferred language practice at home, they believed that OPOL, with the mother speaking Greek and the father English, is the best approach with their child, who was less than a year old and went to the crèche regularly.

As a concept, I think it is better that you stick to one language... because I've read things like that - that they associate one parent with one language (Parent 1, 6 June 2014).

This extract clearly showed that this couple was convinced that OPOL was the best language strategy for parents with different first languages. “Because I've read things like that...” demonstrated there was abundant literature about this policy to the extent that it was considered as the sole route to simultaneous bilingualism. Although there are other alternative strategies, they may not be readily accessible.

### 4.3 “Practiced Language Policy”

The following section will give examples of the OPOL policy in practice or how professionals implement it on a day-to-day basis. In this scenario, there were three professionals and seven children. The “hello time” was the first activity of the day when the professionals facilitated the singing of English and French songs. This activity was also used as an opportunity to greet the children, to know their interests and to create an atmosphere of learning. I characterized this time slot as one of the first informal learning moments of the day because children were hearing vocabulary terms in both English and French. Below is an excerpt taken from my observation notes, dated October 13, 2013.

*Who: English-speaking carers (2), French-speaking carer (1), Children (7)*

#### After the singing routine

EngCarer1:	Hello everybody!
EngCarer2:	Hello!
EngCarer1:	Did you have a nice weekend?
Child1:	Mon doudou...
EngCarer1:	Hello doudou! Did... did you go apple picking?



To provide a more contextualized analysis of this scenario, I will include essential information about the professional who served as the activity facilitator and was identified as EngCarer 1. This professional was born in England. Her parents are English. When she was three years old, her family moved to France. Since then has lived in France except for a school year during her high school where she studied in England. Even though, she lived for the most part in France and identified herself as French, by nationality she was English. At the time of the interview, she and her French partner had a monolingual French pre-school daughter.

Regarding language acquisition use, the professional's first few words were in English, but from age three and onwards, French became her dominant language while keeping English as her language of communication with her parents. Before working in this bilingual crèche, she worked at a public crèche, where the language of communication was French.

In the excerpt above, the professional responded to the child exclusively in English except for the French word "doudou," which was produced by the child. This effort to maintain her assigned language meant that she embraced her role seriously. However, she broke the OPOL rule when she repeated the word "doudou" instead of using a possible English alternative such as teddy, doll or toy. This could perhaps be explained by the fact that as a Francophone and having a young child of her own, she understood that there was an affective dimension to the term "doudou." There was no English term that could replace this emotionally loaded word. A "doudou" is a very precious object to a child; it provides comfort in the absence of the mother and to a certain extent serve as the mother's substitute in the day care structure. The professional's choice to use "doudou" could also mean that she recognized the child's interaction and valued her participation. Furthermore, it could also be interpreted as a sign of respect by calling the object as the child would call it. It could also be an example of code switching where the word in English is not available to the speaker at the time of the utterance.

The last part of this extract showed that although the professional accommodated the child by using the French term most familiar to the child. However, she made a subsequent choice to revert at once to English with a question relating to a different topic, as she was aware that she had to fulfil the responsibility she was tasked to do. By asking another question, "Did you go apple picking?" she was fully aware of her goal – to engage the other children in a conversation in the target language or to put the children back on track of interacting in English.

#### ***4.4 Language Policy Negotiation: An Indispensable Language Practice***

Although there was a clear language policy in place, it was interesting to see how policy was implemented on daily basis and to some extent negotiated to ascertain the normal functioning of the crèche (Caporal-Ebersold & Young, 2016).



The situation described below was taken from my observation notes dated March 27, between 9:45 to 10:15, during the sixth month of the research. As routine, before the children ate their fruit snacks, the professionals led two songs: one in French and one in English. The French-assigned professional led a song in French, and the English-assigned professional led a song in English. During the first few months, the OPOL policy was implemented quite rigidly. However, during this particular occasion, one of the children asked to go to the toilet, which was urgent. The French-assigned professional attended to child and eventually had to leave the room. The English-assigned professional as she was alone did not have a choice but to lead both the English and the French songs. Thus on this occasion, she switched from functioning in a monolingual mode to a bilingual mode (Grosjean, 2010).

Employing participant-observation in understanding the language policy and practice at the crèche, I observed that for the first few months, the staff members were very strict in the implementation of the OPOL policy. However, as months went by, there was a growing tolerance on language use and occasional code switching. This could be seen as a realization on the part of the professionals that there were instances and circumstances when and where strictly maintaining the assigned languages were more complicated.

#### ***4.5 Perceived Language Policies on Bilingualism***

This section refers more specifically to the language acquisition beliefs and ideologies of one of the English-assigned professionals and of some parents in the crèche.

The first excerpt was taken from an interview with a professional who was assigned to speak English with the children. As an Anglophone, who lived in a Francophone area of New Brunswick, Canada, she had a personal experience in a French Immersion Program for 8 years. She moved to Strasbourg because her husband found a temporary research job at the Université de Strasbourg. Although she completed university degrees in Biology and Chemistry, she also had a very strong background working with children. In fact, at the time of the interview, she held two part-time jobs: a teaching position at a bilingual nursery for children between and 3 to 6; and a staff position in the English-French crèche, where she was completing her first year of service. In both places, she was assigned as an English speaker.

At the crèche, you do less things that are with language. I mean the language is always present, but you can, you know, it's like more physical things that you are doing, and you can show them physically, you're not doing your activities solely based on the idea of a word or understanding what that word means (Prof 1, 2 June 2014).

Initially, I thought that by saying, "doing less things with language," she exemplified a limited understanding of the imperativeness of a rich language input and interaction with babies and young children. However, on closer analysis, I understood she was explaining the distinction between schools and crèches. As far as she was concerned, formal teaching and learning should take place at school and not in

crèches. In other words in a crèche, children are not supposed to be taught various kinds of knowledge. This conceptualisation of ECEC was reiterated a number of times elsewhere during my interviews with the association president. During the application process of would-be families, this point was made clear to the parent. The goal of the crèche was not to teach English but to provide an environment where the two languages were spoken. Furthermore, the professional mentioned that she used other creative means to communicate with the children. She had an understanding of the different communication strategies and various creative ways of expression, citing the use of gestures, photos, illustration, etc.

#### 4.5.1 Fear of Language Mixing

The mother interviewed below was bilingual in French and English with limited knowledge of German and Hindi. At the time of the interview, her husband, a native of India, recently received his French nationality. He was multilingual, who spoke at least four languages. Their only child, who attended the crèche, was around two years old.

Yeah! We tried to be a little more disciplined because at some point before Amman was born, we were having a horrible language. We were speaking like this Hinglish, Franglish, half of the language is French, half of the language is English so at some point we said that Amman will come, we have really to try to stick more to our language so yeah, so yeah, we made the decision. (P2, 18 February 2014)

The parents showed a very negative impression of the common language practice of bilinguals and multilinguals in multilingual environments known as translanguaging (Garcia, 2016). This is the process in which bilinguals tap on their various linguistic features and resources to make meaningful communicative exchanges. For this couple, translanguaging is a mark of a “horrible language” practice. Interestingly, other parents in the crèche had expressed the same kind of fear.

Indeed, when there are several languages involved questions on language management are relevant. When both parents are multilingual and their combined repertoires include four or more languages, it is common that their language practice will change with the arrival of a child. Parents find themselves asking the following questions: is it all right to mix languages? Would language mixing or switching confuse children or delay language acquisition?

If most parents worry about language mixing between two languages, having four or more languages is considered much more threatening for language acquisition.

Another important point in this excerpt was the ideology of language purity. This parent believed that language mixing was “horrible” and that speaking in different language codes was a sign of being undisciplined. After the birth of their son, they had to change their language practice to ascertain that their child would have a “good language model”. This meant that she started to speak to her son in French only, while her husband in English only. Informed by available language policy

resources on language acquisition that recommended the use of OPOL, they made this a very deliberate decision. Thus, OPOL as a strategy is regarded as an ideal answer to bilingual development and it is felt that it will prevent language mixing.

#### 4.5.2 Myth of the Native Speaker

The excerpt below comes from a French father with a very good English level. He worked at a pharmaceutical company and shared custody of his two children with his former partner, who was employed in one of the European institutions. Important information that needed to be stressed is that he and his partner had decided for their first child to attend a private, bilingual school in which the teachers were “native-speakers.” In this bilingual program, children spent equal number of hours in French and English.

My opinion is that the languages should be taught by the natural speakers, the native speakers or people that are really exposed...to this language. I don't know if you can learn a language by reading books and never going to the country (Parent 3, 30 May 2014).

The parent evoked three important notions in this quotation: the myth of the native speaker (Grosjean, 2010), the importance of language proficiency and the necessity of total language immersion. The first half of the first sentence reflects the belief of many that the “native speaker” is the ideal language user, who possesses a full mastery and possibly inherent fluency. These competences make him the best language teacher or model. The last half of the same sentence provides another possible criterion that qualifies one to teach a language: native-like proficiency as a result of extensive language exposure and use. Meanwhile, the ideal scenario towards effective language learning is total immersion. However, the native speaker/non-native speaker dichotomy is seen to be problematic because it discounts multiple contexts and social processes and categories that have become the norm of a globalised society. Then, we begin to ask: in this super-diverse society, does the term “native speaker” carry any meaning?

## 5 Conclusion

The choice of language policy in a given structure is always decided based either on knowledge, experience or beliefs developed throughout received ideas as clearly shown in the discussions. In a structure such as a monolingual crèche, the issue of language acquisition might not be central (as in the document published by the city hall of Strasbourg where none of the nine important points in the quality charter said anything about language). However, in a bilingual ECEC structure, the management of the two languages will always be a point of discussion and therefore of policy. Children attending a crèche are at a crucial point of language acquisition, and their interaction with two (or more) languages is felt to be very important, thus should be

regulated: how to ensure enough input in both languages, how to avoid language mixing, how to acquire the best accent, etc. are the most common questions which arise.

This ethnographic study of a French-English bilingual crèche in Strasbourg pointed to one specific model of policy ‘one person, one language’ or OPOL. Chosen by the association president, implemented by the professionals and practiced by parents in the family setting, this language was informed by their beliefs about language. It was conceptualized to ensure sufficient language input in the two languages promoted in the structure. Also, it is in place as an attempt to simplify a more complicated multilingual reality. However, our recordings and observations provide a much more complex picture of bilingual language interactions in the crèche.

The distinctions made by Grosjean (2010) between monolingual and bilingual modes, as well as Bonacina’s (2012) distinctions between declared and practiced language policy have been useful to analyse the implications of the OPOL policy. But if one wants to understand the motivations behind OPOL, one must also understand the representations of bilingualism that still dominate discourses today, more specifically the fear of language mixing and the worry that bilingual language acquisition should be delayed if languages are not used separately. Although ECEC structures are different from schools and homes, the ideologies of language are pervasive. Therefore, I can conclude by saying an ECEC context as an intermediary space between the family and schooling is a perfect environment to question the relationship between language policy planning (LPP) and language acquisition. Further research however would need to be carried out in ECEC bilingual structures not using OPOL and whether the language of the children shows more mixing for example. In reality, the ECEC structures at present are more often multilingual than bilingual, and too often they continue to ignore the home languages of the children by not supporting bilingualism developed in the family.

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# Utilizing SLA Findings to Inform Language-in-education Policy: The Case of Early English Instruction in Indonesia



Puput Arfiandhani and Subhan Zein

**Abstract** This chapter reviews relevant literature to extend the debate on early English instruction in Indonesia from second language acquisition (SLA) and language planning and policy (LPP) perspectives. In doing so, the chapter examines the validity of SLA-related arguments that support and oppose early English instruction in the country. The discussion in this chapter demonstrates how SLA research on age effects that has been promoted to inform policymakers as to when to start instruction offers little potential in terms of language-in-education policymaking. It is shown how SLA findings on the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction are more practical to inform language-in-education policymaking. It is argued that should there be an SLA-based rationale for early English instruction, it is not the putative efficacy of early language instruction underlined by the notion ‘the earlier the better’ but the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction. Finally, the chapter provides policy recommendations and directions for future research.

**Keywords** Language policy · Second Language Acquisition (SLA) · Early English instruction · Indonesia

## 1 Introduction

Indonesia is one of the most ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse countries in the world with more than 400 ethnicities, speaking more than 700 distinct languages. Despite this highly diverse linguistic landscape, a nationwide policy to

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adopt and promote the Indonesian language as the national language and lingua franca has succeeded in the prevention of intense ethnic conflict. This success has been attributed to the efforts of the Indonesian government in making the Indonesian language a source of unification rather than division. Through systematic education and intensified promotion, the government has cultivated the Indonesian language's ethnically neutral position and its historical advantages over colonialist languages such as Dutch and Japanese to maintain national unity (Bertrand, 2003).

The portrait of Indonesian's diverse linguistic landscape has become more colorful with the massive introduction of English in elementary schools occurring in the past decade (Supriyanti, 2014). This results in a great majority of the Indonesian children learning English as their third language (L3), since they have already spoken a local language as first language (L1) and learned Indonesian as second language (L2). For some, Indonesian is their L1 and they learn English as an L2. Although the teaching of English in elementary schools has been viewed as significant for providing children with English as a future investment to succeed in an increasingly globalized world, resistance has escalated in the past few years. Scholars such as Alwasilah (2012) and Dardjowidjojo (2003), for example, argued that introducing English to elementary school children would not succeed due to various reasons, including the absence of a speech community in the country as well as children's cognitive immaturity.

This chapter extends the debate on early English instruction in Indonesia from second language acquisition and language planning and policy perspectives. First, it briefly describes the context of elementary English instruction in the country. Then the chapter discusses the supporting argument for early English instruction, followed by an evaluation on the argument that opposes it. Afterward, the chapter attempts to reconcile the contradictory findings and provides recommendations and directions for future research.

## **2 The Context of Elementary English Instruction in Indonesia**

In 1992, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) Republic of Indonesia held a national symposium on education. It was revealed in the symposium that there was greater awareness of the roles of English in the world and that there was a need to regulate official early English instruction. The outcome of the symposium was a recommendation for the government to officially regulate English teaching in elementary schools. MoEC then followed this recommendation by releasing the Decree No. 060/U/1993. The decree states that English instruction may start from Year 4 at elementary level onward. Its status in the elementary school curriculum is local content subject. Being a local content subject means the government authorizes English teaching in an elementary school provided: (1) the society in which the school is located requires it; (2) the school can ensure the availability of qualified teachers and proper facilities to accommodate teaching-learning activities (Sadtono, 2007).



The status of English as a local content subject remained in the following five years or so. Not all schools taught English; only some did. However, there was a surge of interest in English entering the new millennium. A nationwide educational phenomenon occurred when thousands of elementary schools throughout the country showed a sudden enthusiasm about the idea of introducing children with literacy in English (Supriyanti, 2014).

In the early 2000s, school principals realized that with the status of English as a local content subject, the government would not penalize them should they decide to offer English instruction. As a consequence, many of them decided to start teaching English in Grades 4 and 5, while the majority of them offered English instruction as early as Grade 1, despite having no qualified teachers. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) released the Decree No. 22/2006 about The Structure of National Curriculum to strengthen the Decree No. 060/U/1993 by stipulating English to be taught once a week ( $2 \times 45$  min. per lesson) with schools having the freedom to start earlier than Grade 4. The outcomes of English instruction at elementary level are Graduates Competency Standards prescribed by the government in the Decree of Ministry of National Education No. 23/2006. The Graduates Competency Standards place an emphasis on what students are expected to know and do in terms of linguistic competencies (Zein, 2016).

### **3 ‘The Younger the Better’: The Argument that Supports Early English Instruction**

The decision about starting age in language-in-education policy cannot be made on the basis of linguistic consideration alone - there are other social, economic, and political considerations that drive policymakers to officialize early foreign language learning (Enever, Moon, & Raman, 2009). The tendency in our post-modern era is that language policy is subject to change with sociopolitical forces at the macro level (Ricento, 2000). What motivate policies on early foreign language learning for strongly nationalist governments are political reasons such as the increasing demand for foreign language competency.

In Indonesia, as a result of the increasingly globalized world, there is a strong perception that English language competency is crucial for maintaining national development and achieving global competitiveness. On the contrary, parents are more attracted by economic reasons, as they view the value of a particular language in terms of economic development, that is, to enable children to benefit economically from early foreign language instruction (Zein, 2009). These reasons make upgrading citizens’ language proficiency profile imperative - language proficiency is valued and taught through curriculum and schooling infrastructures. Despite this, there is also an SLA-related reason for providing children with early English instruction. While Indonesian parents and various educational stakeholders alike believe in the importance of English for globalisation, their view is synonymous

when it comes to the belief ‘the younger the better’ (Zein, 2009). In addition to the prevalent belief in the importance of English in the global era, the surge of interest in English within this period was also attributed to the assumed advantage that early English instruction offers to children. The majority of Zein’s respondents believed in children having advantages over adults in terms of rate of learning and overall mastery in acquiring a foreign language. They believed in the notion ‘the earlier the better’, that is, the value of an early start and the advantages that it offers to children’s language acquisition. Some of the respondents cited SLA theories that highlight how children’s language learning during this massive cerebral development period is associated with effortless language acquisition process (e.g., DeKeyser & Larson-Hall, 2005; Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003).

This massive cerebral development is considered to be a ‘golden age’ range in which optimum results could be gained through language instruction. Being in ‘the golden age’ range, children are perceived to be better language learners who can master foreign languages faster and easier than their older counterparts (Singleton & Ryan, 2004). This belief stems from the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) that contends that there is a language-related maturationally constrained critical period that ends at a certain point during or at end of childhood that makes language acquisition more arduous and may result in less satisfactory outcomes. The CPH has received significant support from many SLA studies (see DeKeyser, 2000; Long, 2005 for review). A study by Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam’s (2008), for example, shows that near-nativeness rate is consistently higher among younger learners as opposed to older ones. A study by Hakuta, Bialystok, and Wiley (2003) on the results of the 1990 Census of 2.3 million Chinese and Spanish migrants arriving in the USA demonstrates that “the degree of success in second-language acquisition steadily declines throughout the life span” (p. 37).

Nevertheless, other scholars have postulated contradictory arguments against the CPH (see Birdsong, 2006, and Singleton, 2005 for review). Birdsong (2006) stated that there are more than 20 studies that have reported the rate of nativeness among late L2 learners, highlighting that ultimate attainment is still possible among older learners. For Singleton (2005), speaking in terms of the CPH is misleading already due to the significant amount of variation occurring in the way the critical period for language acquisition is understood. Muñoz and Singleton (2011) shared the same view, arguing that the disagreements among researchers concerning the exact nature of maturational constraints have been understated and that other potentially important factors such as amount and quality of input and learners’ attitudes have been largely neglected. The fact is high achieving learners and the low-achieving ones have different attitudes towards languages as well as in their liking and enjoyment of certain learning tasks (Muñoz, 2014a). Furthermore, other factors such as the quality of the input provided in the instruction is more influential to the success of learners at either perception or production level than mere starting age (Muñoz, 2014b). Because the CPH is far from unequivocal (Muñoz & Singleton, 2011), it may not account for the successful L2 development among early and late starters (Muñoz, 2008). Furthermore, most of the CPH-related studies were originally set in the context of naturalistic settings where immediate L2 environment is

readily available and accessible. They were not conducted in FL contexts with limited input. This means that “whatever the result of the CPH in L2 acquisition may be, we cannot simply assume that the same result will be obtained in FL contexts...” (Butler, 2014, p. 5).

With Indonesian parents and educational stakeholders alike affirming the belief ‘the younger the better’, it appears that they are not fully aware of the theoretical discrepancies regarding the CPH. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Indonesia, as it is also found in other contexts worldwide where ‘the younger the better’ belief has been influential in the development of language policies worldwide (DeKeyser, 2013) as in the case of language folk myth policy found in Arizona, the USA (Combs, 2012). As Combs (2012) suggested, laymen appear to be unaware of research studies in SLA giving evidence that seems counterintuitive to their perspective, ignorantly codifying language policies from language folk myths.

Second, both parents and educational stakeholders seem to be unaware that findings generated in L2 contexts are not readily generalizable in FL contexts such as Indonesia. Reflecting the views of the laymen, Indonesian educational administrators and practitioners seem to have ignored the fact that children in the country are not learning in L2 natural learning environments but in an FL context where exposure to English is very limited. Educational policymakers who strengthened the place for English through the Decree No. 22/2006 might have followed the public blindly, taking the notion ‘the younger the better’ for granted. They made it a theoretical foundation for early English instruction without understanding that it is drawn from misinterpretations of SLA findings in L2 settings.

## 4 The Opposing Argument Against Early English Instruction

Language policy researchers such as Alwasilah (2012) understood that the language policy of early English instruction in Indonesia results from misinterpretations of SLA findings in L2 settings. He took the issue even further by stating that it is not the only problem. He argued that early English instruction is not beneficial to Indonesian children’s language acquisition because children are not cognitively mature to benefit from it. Rather than acquiring English as a second or third language successfully, Alwasilah maintained that the children “are confused by a barrage of linguistic input. This linguistic confusion does not lead to effective learning” (2012, p. 7). Alwasilah’s apprehension led to the suggestion to postpone English instruction.

This suggestion is in line with Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson’s (2001) idea that much of the applied research “points to the advantages of postponing formal teaching in specific contexts” (p. 163). It is unknown what Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson meant by “applied research” or “specific contexts”, yet some language policy researchers stand on the same ground (e.g., Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Kirkpatrick,

2012). Kirkpatrick indicated that English instruction should be postponed until secondary level. Although most of his arguments are related to developing multilingualism in the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nation) context, he also expounded an argument that is relevant to SLA. His SLA-related reason for instruction postponement is that “it could be more effective and efficient to delay the introduction of English until the secondary school” because by then “children will be cognitively mature and able to transfer the skills they have acquired in learning local languages to the learning of English and thus learn it far more quickly than if they had started before they were ready” (p. 341). Clearly Kirkpatrick’s argument of young children’s cognitive immaturity as a rationale for postponing English instruction is parallel to Alwasilah’s. The latter argued that it is more necessary to develop children’s linguistic competencies in the local and Indonesian languages prior to learning foreign languages such as English (Alwasilah, 2012). This is especially because learners’ L1 literacy level may affect their language learning development and that their prior knowledge on L1 could be beneficial for them to learn L2 (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004).

This suggestion was then implemented as a language-in-education policy in Indonesia through Curriculum 2013 that stipulates the entire removal of English from the elementary school timetable in the 2016/2017 academic year. In other words, English would only be taught in secondary schools then. MoNE endorsed the piloting of Curriculum 2013 in 2598 model elementary schools throughout the country. Several months later major provinces such as DKI Jakarta banned all public elementary schools in the country’s capital from teaching English during school hours (Wahyuni, 2014).

The year 2014 witnessed another policy change when a structural alteration in MoNE meant the educational ministry became the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC). The newly appointed MoEC Minister made a political manoeuvre by assigning a team of experts to conduct a nationwide revision of Curriculum 2013. Wahyuni (2014) reported that while the revision is underway, the piloting of Curriculum 2013 remains in effect in the model elementary schools. The other schools that are not ready to implement Curriculum 2013 are to operate within the KTSP curriculum guidelines. A nationwide implementation of Curriculum 2013 will only occur after the revision is completed and after its successful piloting is achieved.

A policy change occurred in July 2015 when the Minister of Education and Culture then, Dr. Anies Baswedan, urged schools to teach three languages: Indonesian as the national language, a local language of the school’s choice, and English as a foreign language. Zein (2016) reported that this decision was made against the backdrop of the constant public outcry over the need of elementary English teaching and in preparation for the ASEAN Economic Society (AEC), which took place in December 2015. This was also in alignment with the plan of the Minister to implement the Act No. 24/2009 on the Flag, Languages and the National Anthem and Symbol of Indonesia which stipulates the necessity of the teaching of the national language, the local languages, and foreign languages. It is unclear whether this decision would also affect the 2598 model schools that are still

implementing Curriculum 2013 because the Minister did not endorse a ministerial decree to officialize it.

A recent political decision taken by the Indonesian President in August 2016 resulted in a cabinet reshuffle that saw Dr. Baswedan leave the office, being replaced by Professor Muhadjir Effendi as the new Minister of Education and Culture. The incumbent Minister is yet to follow up on the decision of the previous Minister, since until the time when this chapter is being revised (November 2016), he has not endorsed a ministerial decree related to the teaching of local languages, English and the Indonesian language. The absence of a policy document officializing elementary English instruction means an extended debate on the starting age for English instruction.

To extend the debate, it is now necessary to examine the validity of the suggestion to postpone instruction on the basis of younger children's cognitive immaturity. Cognitive maturity facilitates L2 acquisition in a minimal-input setting because it allows for the conscious and deliberate processes involved in explicit learning (Dörnyei, 2009). Explicit learning enables learners to benefit from minimal input and draws on their metalinguistic awareness, which is their cognition of language in terms of its nature, function, and form. Bialystok (2001) stated, "[m]etalinguistic awareness implies that attention is actively focused on the domain of knowledge that describes the explicit properties of language" (p. 127). This metalinguistic awareness is related to metalinguistic knowledge (i.e., knowledge about language) and metalinguistic ability (i.e., the capacity to use knowledge about language) (Bialystok, 2001).

Various studies have reported the correlation between learners' cognition and their language acquisition. Studies by Mora (2006) and Muñoz (2006, 2008), are parallel in validating the superiority of late starters over the early ones. In studies in which there is constant amount of exposure in instructed FL settings, a faster rate of learning is found among older learners instead of younger ones (Muñoz, 2008). The reason is because older learners are more advanced than younger learners in terms of cognitive development, and that such cognitive development accounts for their consistent and significant superiority (Muñoz, 2006). Thus, it is argued that in many educational contexts in FL settings where students only receive about two hour exposure per week, older children and adolescents are better at explicit learning because of their superior cognitive maturity (Muñoz, 2008).

However, the plausibility of the argument to postpone English instruction until secondary schools on the basis of children's cognitive immaturity is under question. There are studies that contradict the superiority of older learners over the younger ones. For instance, studies conducted by Takahashi et al. (2011), Hidaka et al. (2012), and Kwon (2006), all suggest the superiority of early starters, regardless of several contributing factors. Kwon's investigation of elementary school children in South Korea demonstrates the superiority of younger learners who started studying in 2003 compared to those studying in 2006. The study proves that early exposure gives positive impact not only on children's language development on the cognitive domain but also their affective one. One may argue on the basis of the studies above that cognitive maturity is not absent among younger learners. But it might be pre-

mature to infer anything from these studies alone other than the researchers' claim of the superiority of early starters to their older counterparts. One obvious thing is that it is necessary to identify whether younger learners are truly cognitively immature so that early English instruction needs to be postponed. This leads the discussion to the following section.

## 5 Reconciling Contradictory Findings

It is necessary to reconcile the findings that support older learners' cognitive superiority over young learners (e.g., Mora, 2006; Muñoz, 2006, 2008) on the one hand and those that demonstrate the opposite (e.g., Hidaka et al., 2012; Kwon, 2006; Takahashi et al., 2011). There is a common thread in those studies in that they were conducted to inform language-in-education policymaking about when to start instruction by comparing younger learners who began learning an FL at an early point with older learners who began at a later point (Muñoz, 2008). The rationale of those studies was to identify whether younger starters have advantages in FL instructional settings over older starters.

This rationale, however, only generates inconclusive findings. Contradictory findings are even more evident if specific areas of instruction are examined. Studies demonstrating the superiority of younger learners are abundant; for instance, in the areas of speaking (Uematsu, 2012), and listening and reading (Shizuka, 2007) but there are others that show the superiority of older starters in terms of listening (Takada, 2004), pronunciation (Kajiro, 2007), and grammar and vocabulary (Shizuka 2007). It appears that the contradictory nature of studies in FL settings resembles the L2 settings (see previous section), which suggests that no matter where the studies are conducted, contradictory results in regard to the putative efficacy of early language instruction are likely to emerge.

According to Butler (2014), these inconclusive findings have resulted from the varying measuring procedures and the age of exposure being confounded by hours of instruction, that is, early starters receiving longer instruction. The variability of the elementary EFL programs, which includes the quality and content of instruction, is also influential in generating contradictory results in those studies. DeKeyser (2013) argued that most studies purporting the superiority of younger learners are problematic in terms of methodology. For instance, there are problems in the design of the studies, as researchers are required to introduce variables due to the different L1 s spoken by the participants. Moreover, when there is little variation in terms of the structures of the tests and the test items are not representative of the structures, any claims made for generalization and reliability of findings are groundless. For this reason, DeKeyser (2013, p. 61) asserted that “[t]here is little research on age effects that meets very high methodological standards, no research whatsoever that meets all the standards outlined here, and almost no evidence that is clearly of educational relevance.” (see DeKeyser, 2013, for further review).



It is now evident that grounding language-in-education policy on early English instruction on ungeneralizable SLA findings is imprudent, as much as grounding it on the assumption ‘the earlier the better’ that misinterprets SLA findings in L2 settings. Age-effect factors “will need to be interpreted in the same light as age-related factors in every other domain of learning” (Muñoz & Singleton, 2011, p. 26). This implies research on age-effects having less potential to inform language-in-education policymaking. Questioning whether early starters have advantages in FL instructional settings over late starters may have less direct impact than investigating whether early English instruction benefits children’s language acquisition (Zein, 2017).

In terms of language-in-education policy, it may be more practical to ask: “Does early English instruction benefit children in terms of language acquisition?” Investigating the potential benefits of an earlier start that can be accrued from instruction is crucial because it can help understand whether younger learners are truly cognitively immature (Zein, 2017). By doing so it could be identified whether it is necessary to delay English instruction in Indonesia until secondary level.

There is ample evidence from recent literature suggesting how children in many EFL contexts benefit from early exposure to the language. This is evident in cognitive domain such as vocabulary where input-based and production-based instructions contribute to receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge and positively affect vocabulary acquisition (Shintani, 2011) and grammar in which incidental grammar acquisition can be enhanced through the provision of a functional need (Shintani, 2015). In terms of affective domain, intrinsic motivation may be increased through quality instruction where teachers facilitate “students perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness” (Carreira, Ozaki, & Maeda, 2013, p. 716).

Early English instruction is also beneficial in terms of language learning strategies as reported by Benveggen (2011) whose instruction technique using Cognitive Vocabulary Learning Strategies (CVLS) contributed to the 8–10 year old Swiss children in her study developing more effective recall and spelling abilities. Muñoz’s (2014a, b) study of 74 elementary EFL children in Spain demonstrated children’s “early awareness of foreign language learning, and learning conditions” (p. 24) and “the lack of transparency of English orthography, which stands in contrast to these children’s first languages” (p. 37). The growth of aptitude among children age 6 onwards is also viable through effective instruction as reported in a study conducted by Milton and Alexiou (2006). The researchers argued that this growth is indicative of young children demonstrating explicit learning that reflects cognitive maturity. Although older learners may indeed develop more advanced cognition, Milton and Alexiou asserted that younger learners’ cognition is still developing and that instruction can enhance children’s metalinguistic abilities.

The list of findings above (Benveggen, 2011; Carreira et al., 2013; Milton & Alexiou, 2006; Muñoz, 2014b, 2014c; Shintani, 2011, 2015) is not meant to be exhaustive but is hopefully sufficient to provide evidence for the benefits of early English instruction for children’s English language acquisition. This occurs with children having very little exposure to the language such as 2 × 45 minute-lesson

per week (Shintani, 2011) and opportunities to be exposed to the language outside school ranging from very little to almost none (Shintani, 2015). This is due to the fact that those studies were carried out in EFL contexts (e.g., Switzerland, Japan) where children also learned other languages at school (Benveggen, 2011; Shintani, 2011, 2015). No evidence can be drawn from the studies that children in these FL contexts were encountering difficulties when receiving early English instruction. What seems to happen is that even in a minimal input setting such as those in FL contexts early start does make a difference, albeit modestly (Larson-Hall, 2008). This appears, for example, in children aged 8–10 who succeeded in their vocabulary acquisition (Shintani, 2011). Muñoz (2014a, b), stated that children at this age range have developed language awareness as well as “a transition towards self-regulation with cognitive maturity” (p. 37). But it seems that younger learners such as those aged 6 who thrive in their incidental grammar acquisition also demonstrated some level of cognitive maturity as shown in Shintani (2015). The learners’ success in acquiring vocabulary at this age range also corroborates Milton & Alexiou’s (2006) contention of young learners’ aptitude growth and their ability to engage in explicit learning.

Thus, younger children appear to demonstrate some level of cognitive maturity, allowing them to advantage from instruction despite the little amount of exposure. It may not be possible to ascertain the extent of their cognitive maturity from the current literature, but it is evident that early English instruction is not to the detriment of children’s cognitive development. Even modest results in various language acquisition areas discussed above are adequate to purport its significance in laying an early foundation to L2 learning that would ultimately lead to more practice opportunities and stronger proficiency (Moyer, 2004).

This makes a case against the argument to postpone early English instruction in Indonesia on the basis of children’s cognitive immaturity. The fact that children in those EFL contexts are able to pick up aspects of language acquisition (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, motivation) does not signal their cognitive unreadiness to learn English as a foreign language. Early English instruction at elementary level would provide learners with “a beneficial effect for starting to study a language at a younger age, even when input is only minimal” (Larson-Hall, 2008, p. 59).

## 6 Concluding Remarks

In Indonesia, the roles of globalization, economic demands and aspiration for early English acquisition have been overwhelming. Elementary English instruction is a phenomenon so prevalent that even Rachmajanti’s (2008) assertion to commence instruction in Grade 4 instead of 1 has done little to dampen parental enthusiasm and society’s interest. Postponing early English instruction is a denial to the macro-policy factors contributing to its conception. It is very unlikely that elementary schools would postpone instruction even if SLA findings were against it.



However, what this chapter has demonstrated is that SLA is not entirely against early language instruction. Instruction is beneficial for children's acquisition, highlighting the importance of SLA research. The problem is SLA research on age effects arguably only offers little potential in terms of language-in-education policymaking (Zein, 2017); therefore, it might be more useful for researchers working in the SLA and or LPP domains to look for evidence beyond SLA studies on age effects. This chapter has demonstrated that SLA findings on the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction are more useful to inform language-in-education policymaking.

The implication is that early language instruction is worthwhile; there is no need to withdraw it from elementary level of education. Should there be an SLA-based rationale for early English instruction, it is not the putative efficacy of early language instruction underlined by the notion 'the earlier the better' but the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction. Coupled with the strong macro socio-economic and political factors, the potential benefits that can be accrued from instruction make up another rationale for early English instruction.

Using the potential SLA benefits that can be accrued from instruction is an attempt to avoid the codification of language policy coming from language folk myths (Combs, 2012). Thus, what is now necessary is for the Indonesian government to endorse a language policy for the teaching of languages in schools. There needs to be a ministerial decree that not only officializes compulsory English instruction at elementary level as per the public's aspiration (Hawanti, 2014; Zein, 2009) but also stipulates instruction along with the teaching of a local language of the school's choice and the Indonesian language. The previous MoEC Minister's exhortation could "provide a framework for the establishment of simultaneous instruction in which the teaching of indigenous languages, Indonesian, and English is made viable within the elementary school curriculum" (Zein, 2016, p. 57). As Zein (2016) argued, such a policy appears to be a strategic language policy representing all language needs at the local, national and global levels. It further aligns with the 2003 Education Act, which aspires to a democratic vision of education that values religious and cultural values associated with Indonesian and indigenous languages without neglecting the global aspirations that are associated with English.

A multilingual education policy as such will need to implement a gradualist approach to policy implementation (Bertrand, 2003) in order to facilitate greater understanding between the multilingual communities in the country. Taking the lesson from the adoption of Indonesian language as the national language where the language was embraced most enthusiastically when there was no coercion, it is important to take into account the country's multilingual context. This means it is necessary to consider the fact that English is learned as an L3 by a great majority of Indonesian children and as an L2 for others. SLA studies demonstrate that there are dynamic interactions in language processing of L1, L2, and L3 as the children learn them in a simultaneous manner (e.g., Herdina & Jessner, 2002), while on the other hand the role of L1 oracy in L2 oracy is unclear (e.g., Bigelow & Tarone, 2004) and that children's cognitive maturity affects L2 literacy but not L2 oracy (e.g., García Mayo & García Lecumberri, 2003; Muñoz, 2006). This brings ramifications in areas

that are beyond the purview of this chapter. There are areas that merit further research in order to inform language-in-education policymaking on how this simultaneous instruction can be effectively implemented in a multilingual Indonesia.

First, the dynamic interactions in language processing of children speaking a heritage or indigenous language as L1 while they learn Indonesian as their L2 and English as their L3 merit further research. It is also necessary to investigate the role of children speaking Indonesian as their L1 in terms of how their oracy of the Indonesian language could benefit oracy in English and how their cognitive maturity affects their literacy in English language. Finally, further research may also need to investigate how and to what extent early English instruction in Indonesia boosts the acquisition of the language by the school children as they graduate from every level of education.

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# Portuguese as an Additional Language: Domains Use among Young Learners



Ana Cristina Neves

**Abstract** Three key concepts will make up the pillars of this paper: second, foreign and heritage languages. Whenever appropriate “additional language” will be used as an umbrella term. A study of the domains of language use will be applied to these three different sociolinguistic contexts. To date, there are not many empirical studies on the domains of language and, more specifically, among young learners in different areal contexts, as it is the case of this study.

The target language of this study is Portuguese as an additional language: a second language in Cape Verde, a heritage language in the Portuguese-speaking community of Switzerland, and a *de facto* foreign language in Macao. The main purpose of this paper is to identify to what extent language policies promote the language use among young learners and their language choice. In order to do so, we will identify the domains of language use of Portuguese by primary school children in these three different contexts, while we have a look into the different layers according to which the policy-making is organized within the three sociolinguistic contexts. A questionnaire considering three selected domains of language use adapted to young learners, namely private, public and educational, was ministered to 591 pupils. The findings that emerge from this study show three different models based on the three fore-mentioned domains of language use: the II-model for a foreign language, the V-model for the heritage language and the X-model for the second language.

**Keywords** Second language · Language policy · Domains of language use · Additional language · Heritage language · Foreign language

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## 1 Introduction

This paper will focus on the Portuguese language as a second language, a heritage language and a foreign language. Historical factors have contributed for several particularities of the Portuguese language that deserve more attention in the study of second language acquisition and policies. We see that the Portuguese-speaking world has the particularity of the non-linearity of its belonging countries, that is, they do not share a border with any other Portuguese-speaking country, when compared to other major languages worldwide. In this sense, they are isolated from each other, which is not the case of any other of the most spoken languages worldwide. In fact, the case of the Portuguese-speaking world is unique, as it is the only of the 10 most spoken languages worldwide that reveals a non-linear geographic line throughout the continents.

Other distinctive features of the Portuguese-speaking world as one of the most spoken languages worldwide are: (1) its historical presence in all continents due to the discoveries of the Portuguese; and, (2) the diaspora, which has played a role for decades in the form of a source of foreign exchange income, demographic ageing and a shrinking working age population, among others. In 2013, ten of the 16 most important destination countries for Portuguese emigration are located in Europe; and Switzerland, along with France, are the two main destination countries for Portuguese emigrants (Vidigal & Pires, 2014). These characteristics make the Portuguese-speaking world, from a sociolinguistic perspective, and more precisely in the context of language policy, a very singular object of study.

The target population of this study stems from three different countries where Portuguese is learned as an additional language, whereby additional language is used to refer to second, foreign and heritage languages. All three areal settings of the target population take place in the formal education at the primary school, whose participants share an instrumental and extrinsic learning motivation. As we will see, the observable differences among these settings can be accounted for socio-politically reasons with effects at the educational level, as demonstrated by an analysis of domains of language use.

For a better overview of the process of language-policy making, an analysis based on three main layers or levels that, however, are not independent of each other (Baldauf, 2008), as proposed by Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) will be carried out. This analysis does not intend to be exhaustive, rather sectorial, that is, it is limited to the educational sector (Spolsky, 2009), particularly the compulsory public system. Other elements are definitely relevant in terms of the overall process of language policy-making but they are beyond the scope of this study.

At the macro-level, that is, at the level of the national regulations, there are several documents or tools that address an overt language policy. The institutional or meso-level includes the institutions and the tools that put into practice the national regulations of the macro level in the sector of public education (cf. Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 240). We find here the curricula, some school materials and even the required teaching qualifications. The micro-level entails the schools and students at the local level.



In the case of Cape Verde, where Portuguese is a second language for the speech community, it is especially important as reading materials are mainly printed in Portuguese, and in writing as long as the new phonetic-phonological alphabet of the national language, *Kabuverdianu* or the creole of Cape Verde, has not been put into practice. At the macro-level, the revised constitution of Cape Verde grants the official status to the second language and emphasises the role of the first language, a creole language that should be promoted and developed, especially its writing system (CVG 2010; DLCV, 1998).

In the case of Macao, at the macro-level, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China grants the use of the local "languages in common use in the locality" (NPC, Section 6, Art. 121). At the local level, the Basic Law of Macao, a mini-constitution grants the partial co-official status of the Portuguese language, which can be used by "the executive authorities, legislature and judiciary of the Macao Special Administrative Region" (MG, Ch. I, Art. 9). It is noteworthy to emphasize that Macao has a very unique school system, as each school develops its own curriculum. This also means that each school, especially the private ones, can decide what languages they make compulsory in their curricula, although the government offers financial support to the private ones especially when they contemplate Portuguese. Currently, there are 11 public schools, two of which have Chinese as the main means of communication, one does the same with Portuguese and eight offer Portuguese and mainly Chinese classes (DSEJ, 2015). However, it is worth mentioning that most of the local schools in Macao make English compulsory in their curricula with a two-hour weekly course, which does not happen with the Portuguese language that is at the most an optional subject. This means that the number of English speakers in Macao will certainly increase, just as it has been rising for the last years. Therefore, Portuguese is a *de facto* foreign language, despite its co-official status and its presence as a means of communication in two institutions that make it the main means of instruction in their sections at the primary education: Macao Portuguese School and Luso-Chinese Primary School of Flora; whereas the former is a private school, the latter is a governmental institution, divided into two sections, the Chinese and Portuguese, offering both languages as means of instruction.

Considering the heritage language, Switzerland represents a special case highlighted by its unique *Sprachengesetz* (EDK, 2007; BSE, 2007), which puts weight on the mutual understanding of a multilingual community that affords itself having four national languages as its essential feature and landmark, by making compulsory the learning of at least one of the other national languages in the school system. Notwithstanding this, when communicating with speakers who do not master any of these four languages, according to §5 of Art. 6, the official bodies should as far as possible make use of another language. Particularly noteworthy is §3 of Art. 16 which encourages the cantons to grant financial support to the enhancement of the first languages of speakers of other languages. This is, however, a decision that has to be made at the cantonal level. Pragmatically, this means that, if a certain first language is well represented in one particular school by reaching a certain number of native children, the school will include this language in the children's timetable; if not, the foreign education coordination of the respective country (in this case, Portugal) will organize and promote those courses. In any of these cases, the Common European Framework of Reference for languages sets the guidelines and benchmarks.

In other words, regarding the national curricula, Cape Verde follows its national curricula; in Switzerland, Portuguese curricula follow the Common European Framework of Reference for languages; and in Macao there are no national curricula, which leads to the fact that each school develops its own curricula.

There are also differences regarding these three specific contexts at the meso-level. In the case of Cape Verde, where Portuguese is the official language, some of the school materials are printed in and literally imported from Portugal. That is, the material produced in Cape Verde does not take into consideration the additional language by following guidelines meant for Portuguese as a first language. Material produced in Cape Verde does not include a variety in pedagogical activities and is basically very mnemonic. In Europe, in the case of Portuguese as a heritage language, the material is produced in Portugal by a variety of publishers that play a major role in the sense that they have their own selection criteria regarding book authors, topics and approaches. In Macao, materials are produced by the teachers, usually in the form of hand-outs and alike, along with a couple of locally produced course books.

Teaching staff is mainly local, except in the case of the heritage language, whose majority of teaching staff members are hired by the Portuguese authorities – although this is slowly changing. In any of the cases, the increasingly required teaching qualifications have been adapted to the needs of these school systems. It is noteworthy that a quota of the teachers in these host countries keeps, however, being made available by the Portuguese State, according to Article 5 of the Portuguese Decree-Law no. 234/2012 of 30 October (DLP, 2012), by either accounting for teachers' recruitment, placement and hiring or supporting the recruitment and selection process initiated by other entities than the Portuguese.

At the micro level or at the level where students are directly impacted, there are differences regarding the amount of hours of exposure to the target language, the variety of linguistic input, appropriation process, mixed learning strategies, type of motivation and even the means of instruction. The time of exposure to the target language is longer in the case of the second language, as the means of instruction is Portuguese and therefore all subjects are taught in this language, and decreases comparatively in the foreign language, in which case students attend a weekly four-hour Portuguese course in the public schools. As a heritage language, students are exposed to a weekly two-hour course, depending on the size of the class; family and relatives represent here the main conveyors of the Portuguese language and culture. In the case of the second language, we generally witness a broader diversity of linguistic input and exposure to linguistic varieties, whereas in the case of the heritage language, learners are mainly exposed to input received from their social network and relatives. In the case of the foreign language, the input is limited to the classroom.

This implies different processes of language appropriation: in the case of the second language, it is a formal process that takes place in school; whereas in the case of the heritage language, the process starts by being one of acquiring the target language in an informal manner within their families and moves on to a conscious and more formal process of learning the rules of the target (heritage) language, once



formal schooling age is reached. This is closely linked to the fact that the second language, Portuguese, is one of the means of instruction in the first situation, where word loaning is very common, mainly due to the fact that the national language, the creole of Cape Verde, does not have a standardized writing system and therefore the second language represents the lexifier or even the language of scientific knowledge, which depicts a diglossic community. In the case of the foreign language, Portuguese faces a formal and conscious process of learning.

In the future, it is expected that the former children of diaspora who are more familiar with both cultures – the heritage culture and the host culture –, will be the ideal teachers for these contexts. A similar situation is also taking place in Macao, where Macanese speakers of both previously mentioned official languages, Portuguese and Cantonese, are the teachers and conveyors of the Portuguese language in this context.

Now that the scene has been set and the complexity of the object of study of this paper has been described, namely Portuguese as an additional language, we will have a look into the theoretical background of the terms *additional language* and *domains of language*.

## 2 Literature Review

As previously mentioned, the term additional language is here used as introduced by Schinke-Llano (1990), that is, as an umbrella term for contact languages or any other languages than the native ones. This is, therefore, an operational definition to refer to the formal process of learning a language regardless of the amount of linguistic input, covering all contexts that make the object of study of this piece of writing as described in the previous section. Consequently, it is a concept that considers mainly the end product or students' proficiency level.

Second language, in the sense of the acronym SLA or Second language acquisition, has been interpreted according mainly to the research field. From a sociolinguistic point of view, a second language is considered to be the language with official status in detriment of the spoken dialects or other languages with a comparatively low status. Its first usage, however, goes back to Catford (1959), who defines it by opposition to its counterpart, primary language or mother tongue, which overlaps the definition of additional language by Schinke-Llano (1990). It is the seminal work of Krashen (1981) proposing the distinction of two different but complementary processes – the one of (language) learning and the one of (language) acquisition – that culminates in the association of first language with *acquisition* and, by extension, foreign language with *learning*. These two different processes presuppose different roles and statuses of the co-existing languages, putting the focus on any other language than the mother tongue, native language or first/primary language. This means that learning a foreign language always presupposes a formal and conscious learning process of any other language than one's mother tongue, considering a linguistic situation of interlocutors that share a mother tongue that is

not the target or foreign language. A second language is learned by speakers of other languages in places, where the target or, in this case, the second language has an official and institutional status. Usually the second language fulfils linguistic functions that cannot be covered by the co-existing language that, for instance, might not have a writing system, as it is the case of the creole language of Cape Verde. Often the second language assumes that role in a specific community for socio-historical reasons. A third key-term in this paper is heritage language, which is the language acquired within the family in the diaspora and immigrant communities which also make up the Portuguese-speaking world. Valdés (2005, p. 411) defines it as follows:

In recent years, the term *heritage language* has been used broadly to refer to nonsocietal and nonmajority languages spoken by groups often known as linguistic minorities. Those members of linguistic minorities who are concerned about the study, maintenance, and revitalization of their minority languages have been referred to as *heritage language students*.

In any of the above-mentioned sociolinguistic situations, there are distinctive features regarding language policies, language functions and domains of language use. We are particularly interested in establishing a link between the first and the latter.

The concept of *domain* of language use was first introduced by Georg Schmidt-Rohr (1932) and coined by Joshua A. Fishman in the 1970's within the field of societal behaviour, who translated the original German term *Sprachgebiet* to *language domain*. There are, however, some differences. The domains or *Gebiets* identified by Schmidt-Rohr, namely, family, street/playground, school as medium of instruction, school as subject, school as social language, church, literature, press, military, court/judicial system, and public administration, were regrouped in Fishman's development of the theory according to constellations of interlocutors, topic and location. Fishman defined *domains* "in terms of institutional contexts and their congruent behavioural co-occurrences. They attempt to summate the major clusters of interaction that occur in clusters of multilingual settings and involving clusters of interlocutors" (Fishman, 1972, p. 248; see also Fishman, 2000). Thus, Joshua Fishman considers five main domains: family, friendship, religion, education and employment. Thereafter, domains have been studied mainly to explain language choice, as long as it is subject to social rules and values. Thus, Fasold (2004) explains that domain analysis is related to diglossia or social bilingualism, whereas one language has a lower status, because some domains are more formal than others. It is in this sense that the study of domains has been mainly carried out, accounting for variation, language maintenance and language shift (see also García & Schiffman, 2006). Actually, it is the degree of formality, as Fasold (2004) pointed out, to which at least two co-existing languages are used that allows a distinction between diglossia and bilingualism.

More recently, the concept of domains of language use has been in the spotlight among researchers in Scandinavia since the late 1990's, regarding the increasing interpenetration of English in the higher education, scientific and academic fields, which is causing a 'domain loss' for the Scandinavian languages (Haberland, 2005;

Hultgren, 2013; Laurén, Myking, & Picht, 2002; Ljosland, 2010). Scandinavian research has, thus, modified and expanded Fishman's concept of *domain* to focus more on the outcome on the *domain* of higher education, and also added the term "domain loss" to describe how clusters of linguistic interaction are gradually shifting to another language, namely, English (Haberland, 2005). In addition, further research on domains of language use with young learners in multilingual societies was limited to a specific community, revealing that young speakers of a heritage language tend to use that language while interacting with older generations (Ramiah, 1991 on the Tamil community in Singapore). To our knowledge, there are no other empirical studies to date on the domains of language in the Fishmanian sense and, more specifically, among young learners in different areal regions.

The theoretical concept *domain* refers, therefore, to "an aggregate of locales of communication" (Coulmas, 2013), that allows distinctions such as public vs. private, formal vs. informal. According to the same author, there might be a need for a more detailed distinction, depending on the case.

A remark should be added regarding the ability of young learners to differentiate two languages. We assume that children at the ages covered in this study are able to distinguish both languages for several reasons. First, research findings have shown that, from a developmental perspective, bilinguals are able to differentiate both languages as early as at the age of two years old (Meisel, 1994). Secondly, participants approached the researcher in Portuguese, whenever they felt at ease to do so; once the researcher would switch language, the participants themselves would react surprised and switch the language as well. Thirdly, the fact that we are here dealing with an additional language imposes its use in different settings, roles of relationships, locales, of which the participants are aware, as it is shown by the resistance of some in using it. Last but not least, the data were collected in the specific environment that reinforces the usage of the additional language, that is, in the classroom, where Portuguese classes take place and in the presence of the class teacher of Portuguese.

### 3 Procedure

The main purpose of this study is to shed light onto the domains of language use by young learners in the formal context of instruction and to find out whether there are similarities and differences, as whether learners have a chance to use the additional language at all outside the specific context of formal instruction, and if so, in which specific situations.

In the case of Cape Verde, the results stem partially from a major research project concluded in 2006, whose object of study was Portuguese as a second language in the primary schools of a diglossic community, focussing on grades 4 and 6. Information from a total of 474 participants was collected in 2003. The same questionnaire was adapted and ministered to the sample populations of the two other communities described in this paper, namely, Switzerland and Macao, in 2008 and 2011, respectively. In any of the cases, the questionnaires were delivered by the class teachers with the support of the researcher, whenever allowed. However, this

proved to be beneficial as class teachers knew students' background and were able to help when needed.

The education departments were contacted and the researcher was assigned to the schools and/or teachers involved in the study. Therefore, a convenience sample was collected from 474 young learners in Cape Verde in 2002/3, 49 young learners (of Portuguese) in three German-speaking cantons of Switzerland in 2007/8 and 68 children in Macao in 2010/11. This makes up a total of 591 participants attending grades 4 and 6 of the compulsory school system with ages between 9–15 years old in the case of Cape Verde and between 9–14 in both Switzerland and Macao. In the school year 2002/3, out of a total of 87,843 students enrolled in primary schools, there were 31,607 students enrolled in grades 4 and 6 in Cape Verde (MECV, 2003). In 2007/8 there were about 14,000 students enrolled in the Portuguese courses in Switzerland, according to information provided by the local Education Coordination, although it was not possible to determine the exact number of students enrolled particularly in grades 4 and 6. Finally, in the year 2010/11 there were 23,785 students enrolled in primary schools in Macao (GIB, 2011), whereas 105 students were enrolled in grade 4 and 138 in grade 6 of the five official primary schools (DSEJ, 2010). It is noteworthy to point out that the total numbers of enrolments refer to all non-tertiary schools in Macao, which make up a total of 67 institutions; however, only 5 primary schools are considered to be Luso-Chinese in the sense that they are fully sponsored by the government and offer courses in both languages, Chinese and Portuguese. The data were collected from two of these Luso-Chinese schools, although four of them were contacted. The differences in the target population size account for the disparity in the size of the samples.

In this study, Fishmanian employment and education domains were adjusted and renamed as school domain; the one of religion was dropped as this research focuses on daily activities, and religious practices are not considered to be daily for the majority of the target population; and, family and friends were handled as a single domain that we prefer to call *private domain*. The reason to do so lies mainly on the fact that the sense of neighbourhood shared by the community members makes it natural that friends become close to their family members, especially considering the young ages of the participants. A third domain, the public one, was included taking into account Fasold's discussion (2004). We tried to organize the specific settings in a gradual sequence that goes from the more informal situations, having on one end the interaction with grandparents and parents (in the private domain), to the most formal ones, represented ultimately on the other edge by the school domain and the interplay with the school's principal, although we are aware that the inclusion of some settings in a specific domain might be debatable or that their position in the scale could be moved one position further up or down. This is the case of the already mentioned setting of friends. Focussing only on the three clusters of domains, school, public and private, would be misleading as these should serve mainly as an orientation due to the fact that some of these situations are convergent and blurred, as Fasold points out.

The subjects were asked to fill in a short 5-option questionnaire based on the domains of language use adapted to children. The 5-options and how they were

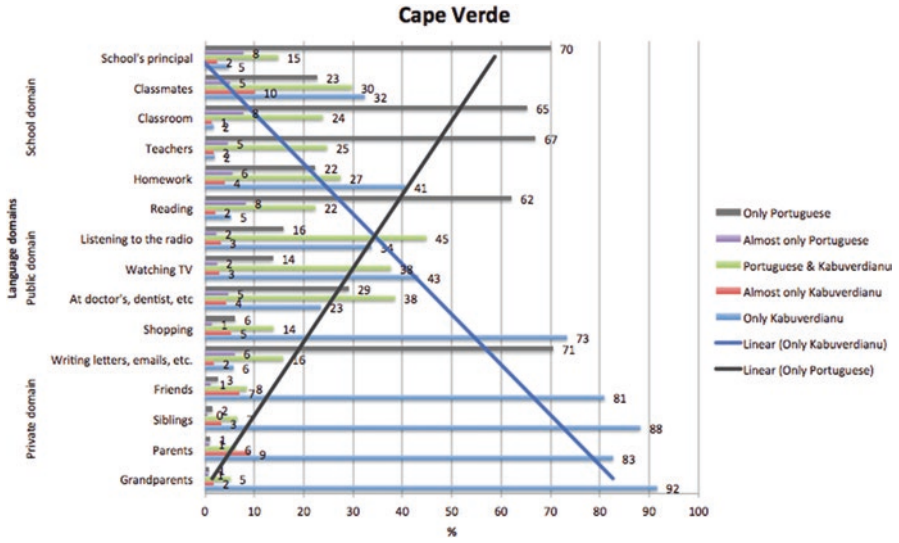


Fig. 1 X-model for the second language

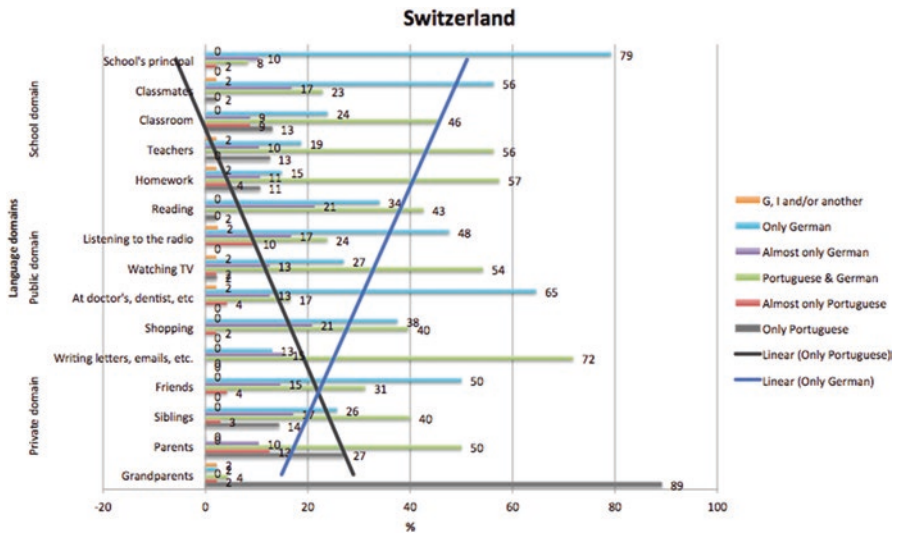


Fig. 2 V-model for the heritage language

adapted to the three contexts can be drawn from the legend of the graphs, and so can the 17 specific closed questions of the questionnaire presented on the y-axis of Figs. 1, 2 and 3. Demographic data on the sample population were also collected, such as age and mother tongue, among others.

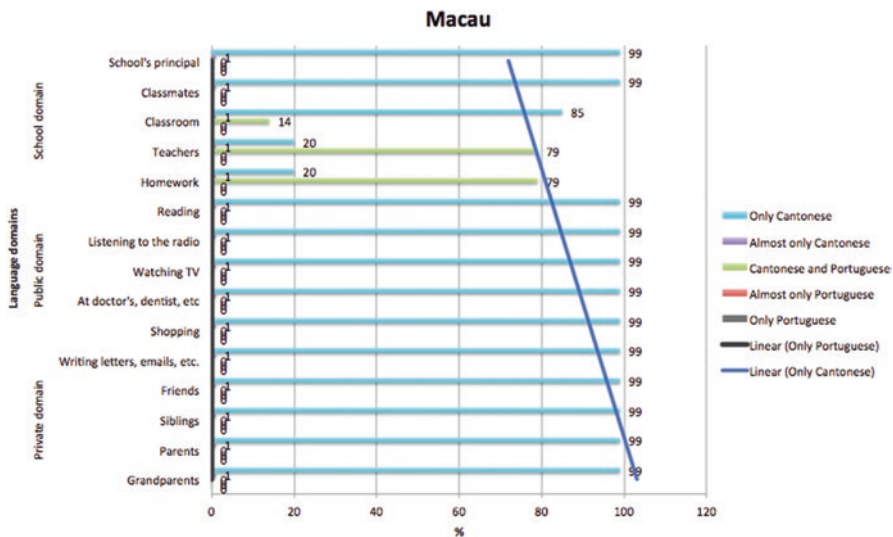


Fig. 3 II-model for the foreign language

Table 1 Distribution of the sample population according to age

	Cape Verde		Switzerland		Macao	
	4th	6th	4th	6th	4th	6th
Grades	4th	6th	4th	6th	4th	6th
Median	10	12	10	12	10	11
Mode	11	11	10	12	9	11

Table 2 Distribution of the sample population according to sex

	Cape Verde	Switzerland	Macao
Male	219	25	37
Female	239	24	30
No answer	16	0	1
Total	474	49	68

Regarding the age of the sample population, its median and mode are represented in Table 1. Table 2 above describes the division of gender in the sample population. The participants had to tick the most adequate answer considering the probability of language use in each item of the three domains. Whenever appropriate, results will be tentatively explained by observational data.

## 4 Results

Figures 1, 2 and 3 above represent the context of the co-existing languages, whereas the additional language, Portuguese, is represented by the linear trend line in black. In an ideal individual and social bilingualism situation both lines would overlap throughout the domains of language use. This would suggest a bilingual family, a bilingual circle of friends, an international school and a community with bilingual services, such as medical care (Fishman, 1972, p. 86).

### 4.1 *Second Language*

In the case of Portuguese as a second language, as it is the case on the Cape Verde Islands displayed on Fig. 1, the additional language is used in the school domain, especially with the school principal and, to a lesser extent, the teachers. A few learners also use the additional language with elder relatives especially the ones who live abroad and that, therefore, stopped using the creole language, *Kabuverdianu*, as they do not feel at ease in situations in which they are forced to use it. There is a clear trend for young learners to drop the official language when they interact with their peers and siblings, as the use of *Kabuverdianu* stands for at least 32% of the responses when interacting with classmates (being also used alternately with Portuguese up to 30%), 81% with friends and 88% with siblings, but not if these live abroad and do not have the habit of communicating in creole, which explains why some of the participants admit to employ the official language, Portuguese, with these interlocutors. One has to consider that when living abroad, there is a higher probability that these speakers have the chance to go on attending courses in Portuguese rather than in the creole language.

According to Fig. 1, the need for both languages results in a joint point of the two crossed lines that stand for the X-model. Both linear trend lines meet in the middle, i.e., in the public domain. However, because they only overlap in the middle point and not across the other domains of language use, this can only be explained by the fact that both languages are complementary. In other words, one language serves the other one in contexts where it cannot be applied. These contexts are clearly those where a standardized writing system, which is depicted in the graph by *writing letters, emails, etc.* with 71% and *reading material* with 62%, and a communication means to the outer community are needed, being these represented by the school system itself and its representatives (teachers and school's principal).

In informal communication among grown-ups, we know that the creole language is also used in writing, although not in a standardised fashion. Recently created social networking services are not only a proof of this fact; in the future, they will also affect the use of languages under such circumstances as the *Kabuverdianu*, stimulating the need for a writing standard and expanding its use beyond the spoken language.



## 4.2 *Heritage Language*

In the case of Portuguese as a heritage language in Switzerland – represented by the black line in Fig. 2 – it is mainly used with elder generations of their home country (89%) and partially in the classroom, with the Portuguese teacher. It is curious to note that two participants of this study admitted to use other languages with their grandparents, such as Italian. This is due to the fact that at least one of their grandparents is originally a native speaker of this language.

The additional language, Portuguese, is not used with siblings, friends and classmates. 50% of the participants admitted to use mostly German with their friends and 31% uses both languages; with siblings, 40% of the learners use both languages and 26% use mainly German. This has to do with the age of the siblings and whether they can speak German as well. Younger siblings sharing the same household will be able and prefer to speak German in detriment of Portuguese; the same does not apply to elder siblings, especially if they are living in their home country, Portugal. Only 27% use solely Portuguese to interact with their parents and 50% use both languages. This is explained by the following situations: (1) many parents are second generation immigrants and therefore prefer to use German in daily communication; (2) other parents, in an attempt to boost their children's German in the sense of a better school and social integration, make an effort in learning and speaking the German language at home; and (3) some children have one Portuguese and another German-speaking parent. All in all, the presence of Portuguese is stronger in the private domain, especially in the interaction with other Portuguese speakers living outside Switzerland, whereas German is the language of the school domain, and therefore the V-model, in which both lines meet at the bottom. There is an interchangeability between both languages in the public domain, although German has a very special place in public services, such as going to the doctor (65%) and listening to radio or music (48%).

In comparison with the second language, it is in the interaction with peers and classmates that the heritage language loses ground to the official language. Often culminating in a generation conflict, parents reinforce usage of the heritage language in an attempt of promoting and protecting their heritage culture, which results in the resistance or even refusal by the young learners to use it.

## 4.3 *Foreign Language*

Fig. 3 depicts the case of the foreign language, in which Portuguese as such is limited to the classroom and to the interaction with the teacher, and also while doing the homework of this school subject. Therefore both lines on the graph fall apart.

It is noteworthy that Cantonese was not the only mother tongue present among these learners. About 7% of them had another Asian language as their mother tongue, like Tagalo or a Chinese variety other than Cantonese. This is a latent or



incipient situation of bilingualism, at least when compared to the previous contexts of second and heritage languages. However, as the subjects of this study are primary school pupils, it would be premature to draw any further conclusions, because the education system might give the individuals other chances to enhance their proficiency in the target language, as it is the case in Macao. This happens, for instance, in the professional development or continuing education courses.

Unlike the previous situations, it is among peers and classmates that Portuguese as a foreign language has a chance of infiltration, although limited to the classroom, in its usage with teachers or while doing the homework. This means that Portuguese alone is never used as the single language of communication, unless it is imposed; both languages are employed between 14%, in the classroom, and 20%, in the case of communicating with teachers and doing the homework.

## 5 Conclusions

The notions of *domain of language use* and *additional language* gain another dimension when considering their analysis for the purpose of language policy. The concept of additional language as presented here generates three models of domains of language use that are not necessarily directly related to what is prescribed at the macro-level of language policy-making. By this we mean that at the macro-level a degree of autonomy is granted, but there is also a degree of complexity. In a broad sense, the differences are already established at the macro-level, as we could see, for example, in the Constitution of Cape Verde which promotes the use of the national language along with the Portuguese official language, or in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China which acknowledges and grants the use of the local languages in use in the community, or even with the existence of a Language Law, as it is the case of Switzerland. The study of domains of language use can mirror to a certain extent different language policies. By doing so, there is a link between domains and language policies that can be easily manipulated at different layers of the language policy-making.

At the meso-level it is important for teaching staff members to be aware of the implications of different language policies, particularly, at the micro-level, as this has an impact at the development and selection of adequate school material (in some of these cases the same books are being used as if the additional language were the mother tongue) and professional qualification (teachers have to know how to deal with these differences in a professional manner). In our experience, teachers are most often aware of the differences but they do not know how to adapt their teaching practice or how to put in practice this knowledge, that is, how to differentiate these settings in their approach to the teaching practice. It is also relevant to inform other stakeholders such as parents who, in many cases, misunderstand bilingualism and consider it a stigma hard to deal with, especially in the case of the heritage language.

Two settings belonging to different clusters of domains stand out in all three models. It is the case of friends and classmates. This means that regardless of domain of language use, as both friends and classmates are rooted in two different domains (private and school) and therefore they are somehow blurred –, language choice seems to be affected by the factor of age, which in turn is in favour of the language in common use, regardless of its socio-political status. Diaspora makes up another group that stands out. Diaspora communities play a more and more significant role in language choice, especially, in the interaction with older generations but also in the public domain. On one hand, we see again the relevance of the age factor; on the other, we recognise the mobility of this language community, which knows no geographical borders. This might be better explained under the light of a cultural identity analysis, which goes beyond the scope of this study.

An accurate study of the domains of language is useful for two main reasons: (1) It is an important source of information that displays the *state of art* of effective language use; (2) On the other hand and if this is the case, it might also be a means of mapping the language use, i.e., it is also an important tool for curricula development or even language planning, as the specific settings in which a certain language is used can be easily identified and further expanded in the curricula and language planning overall. However, this study also brings to light a constraint, namely, that in a more restricted sense, it is difficult to say whether it is language choice that determines the usage of a language in one specific domain or if language choice is so intertwined in the socio-political dimension that it can be easily manipulated by top-down regulations and tools.

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# Language Education Policy and Practice in the U.S.: Emerging Efforts to Expand All Teachers' Understanding About Language Development and Learning



Peggy Mueller and Aida Walqui

**Abstract** This paper presents a singular effort in one major urban area in the United States to strengthen professional development policy and practice concerning language and disciplinary literacy education in multilingual contexts in American schools. Against fixed notions of learning and teaching, this initiative uses a model of language as action and of learning as apprenticeship within disciplines and professional communities of practice. The project represents an effort of key members of an urban practice community of educators to bring to bear their experience and knowledge about learning and teaching in English as a second language, about how language develops, and about how content and language learning develop simultaneously and interdependently – ultimately to support the development of new policy and practice solutions that support English language learners and all students. Such policy solutions emerging from practice also suggest the need for capacity building around the centrality of language in learning for all teachers to catalyze major shifts in practice to better support all learners in U.S. schools in a context that is driven by the need to have higher standards of learning for all. The project represented a collaborative effort and confirmed the urgent need for major shifts in instructional planning, implementation and assessment in all the core disciplines to reflect evolving knowledge about the links between language development and learning – and a call for new policies that support these more effective practices.

**Keywords** English Language Learners · English as Second Language · Language and Literacy Development · Multilingual schools · USA

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## 1 Introduction

Language education policy in the United States in the last 40 years has been dominated primarily by a focus on bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programming and the populations – educators and students – involved in these two program domains in public education institutions. Issues that have driven policy concerning language learning in schools, in particular since the early 1970s, have centered on the civil rights of language minorities in public education; classification of students by their English language proficiency; instructional programming that ensues from such classification; assessment of language students and their teachers; and the development of licensing guidelines for the preparation and development of specialized educators working with students who have been classified as English Language Learners (ELLs).<sup>1</sup>

While such policies and definitions of practice and programs are typically seen to emanate from the highest levels of government in education, the reality is that enactment and local interpretation of language policy can be just as significant a determining force in the lives of students and teachers. The project that is the focus of this paper began with this premise, i.e., that teacher educators and professional developers working with schools to support English language learners are enacting and supporting practices that in fact address the language learning of students – and in fact, teachers’ learning, as well – from unique viewpoints and interpretations of language and education policies, resulting in varied and sometimes conflicting prac-

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<sup>1</sup> To represent the complex challenges inherent in the term, English Language Learners, we reference Heritage, Walqui, and Linquanti (2015): “The concept of an English language learner is in part a policy and legal construct. For example, in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), ELLs are defined as students from an environment where a language other than, or in addition to, English is spoken, and ‘whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny [them] the ability to meet the State’s proficient level of achievement on State assessments; the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or the opportunity to participate fully in society’ (U.S. Statutes at Large, 2002).” As the authors explain, “This definition of a ‘limited English proficient’ student derives from federal civil rights and case law that establishes ELLs as a federally protected class of students. However, inherent in this definition is an orientation toward ELLs of language deficiency. . . . In its deficit orientation, the federal definition, and the many statutes and legal decisions underlying it, do not acknowledge what ELL students can do with their home language or English, or how their home language might be leveraged to assist in learning an additional language. Instead, the orientation and language of much legislation and case law suggest ELLs are ‘limited English proficient’ and foreclosed from any meaningful education opportunity without English; they require language ‘remediation’ to overcome English language ‘deficits,’ and are at risk of incurring ‘irreparable academic deficits’ while doing so” (p. 110). The authors then clarify that “these laws were passed and upheld in the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s in response to a systematic neglect of ELL students’ educational rights. Yet such problematic conceptualizations have their own suggestive power and exist in tension with newer understandings from a range of behavioral sciences” (pp. 110–111). The authors stress that newer understandings about how students learn and how language, content knowledge, and analytical practices can develop simultaneously form the basis for new and more effective approaches – approaches that are the subject of this paper.

tices in the same schools. The project aimed to bring together a regional group of university educators, professional developers, and school district leaders to identify those practices and perspectives in the light of current policies, concerning not only language learning and ELLs, but also the connection between language and learning in the new context of higher learning standards for all students. The conversations among teams of educators from three universities and two urban school districts thus focused not only on what new knowledge all teachers needed to support English learners who increasingly now permeate mainstream classrooms, but also what process of learning among all educators is needed in these new contexts.

Although currently in its inception, the work represents the emergence of a potential sea change in teaching practice and policy related not only to this population of English language learner students, but also to the impact of that change on the wider realms of instruction of all students, the professional preparation and development of all teachers, and its corresponding implications for education policy in the U.S.

Drawing from expert knowledge of the last several decades concerning the development of language in academic contexts, teaching, and education policy, this work challenges traditional theory and practice of effective teaching not only of students currently or formerly classified as ELLs, but also of the wider populations of all students being served by elementary and secondary education institutions in the U.S. It emerges out of a context that involves both an urgent demand for improvements in the quality of curriculum and instruction in the U.S. as well as new opportunities that stem from a growing recognition that major shifts are needed towards a more professional conceptualization of the work of teaching in U.S. school systems. This work also demonstrates the necessity that all teachers gain deep knowledge about language development, its intersection with the learning of content and analytical practices, and its implications for effective teaching practice – not only of ELLs, but also of all students who need support for language development even though their first language may be English.

In part one, this paper presents the context in which U.S. teachers' knowledge and skills about language development is being redefined and expanded. A brief review of the historical and current contexts of U.S. education that give rise to this demand is followed by a description of an ongoing professional development project in which the work itself is being explored. That work constitutes a unique undertaking by a small group of local universities and two urban school systems under the intellectual guidance of a national leader in the field of education for English language learners. Part two presents the case for refining understandings of the relationship between language development and learning and the new knowledge concerning teaching and professional development that this work suggests. The paper concludes with a reflection on preliminary impact and implications for policy emerging from this work on practice. Beyond what in the past might be viewed as another short-term professional development project, this initiative may be characterized more appropriately as "practice-embedded education research" – innovations among professional colleagues that aim to solve deep problems of practice with enduring solutions that pay attention to systemic change (Snow, 2015).

## 2 Context

### 2.1 *Historical Context*

In the United States, education policy has traditionally emphasized “rational” approaches to the control of schooling (Goldstein, 2014; Mehta, 2013), with externally defined and controlled systems of accountability for teachers and a view of teaching as primarily industrial, not professional, work (Tucker, 2011). Teachers have been widely regarded as implementers, i.e., technicians who unproblematically apply fixed knowledge in classrooms. Consistent with this historical view, educators in the U.S. have not been considered authentic professionals with collective responsibility and accountability for advancing and owning knowledge and practice in their field (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Lortie, 1975). At the same time, individual teachers on the front lines of classroom teaching as well as mid-level teacher leaders in districts have also been regarded as critical “policy arbiters” in the complex dynamic of educational policy and practice, in particular in the field of language education (Arias & Faltas, 2012; Compton, 2013; Johnson, 2013; Menken & Garcia, 2010; Shohomy, 2006). Nonetheless, the characterization of teachers’ roles in U.S. education systems as those of “street level bureaucrats” (Lipsky, 1969) has been one of the major areas in which systemic educational reform is needed. Education reformers who see teaching ultimately as a professional act regard the key to school improvement as residing in the strengthening of individual and collective professional knowledge and capacity for decision making about instruction (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Sahlberg, 2011).

The creation of public school infrastructures as efficient factory-like operations during the industrial revolution at the turn of the twentieth century, furthermore, reinforced over time the notion that teaching is largely individualized and insulated work inside classrooms (Lortie, 1975). This isolation of teachers by programs, levels and subjects results in minimal sharing of knowledge and continuous learning among professionals and, in the case of some programs such as bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, the marginalization of that work inside most schools and districts.<sup>2</sup>

Discourse among teachers about language learning as well as the vital interconnectedness between language developments and learning in all subjects has thus

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<sup>2</sup>As defined by the National Association of Bilingual Education, while bilingual education has many manifestations globally, it can broadly be defined to mean “any use of two languages in schoolteachers or students or both – for a variety of social and pedagogical purposes.” As further noted by NABE, however, “In today’s context... in the United States, bilingual education means something more specific. It refers to approaches in the classroom that use the native languages of ELLs for instruction.” Bilingual program services typically are mandated to include the explicit teaching of English in courses that have become known as English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. Many models of bilingual education have evolved over time, depending on federal, state and district practices and include such variances as transitional, maintenance, and dual language models; within these programs, the transition to placement of bilingual/ELL students into mainstream classrooms is widely varied.



been minimal in the professional experience of educators in the U.S. Thus, even where there may be knowledge about language development and how to support it in a school among the teachers working in bilingual programs, that knowledge is not typically shared with or considered the responsibility of mainstream teachers. U.S. teacher education programs – with perhaps only one exception, that of early childhood teacher education which incorporates knowledge about early language development as a critical component of young children’s learning – have not typically included courses concerning language use and development as an integral part of learning in mainstream classrooms (Carrasquillo & Rodriquez, 2002; Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

## 2.2 *Current Context*

In recent years, with the nationwide adoption of higher learning standards, concerns are being raised about how to support all students’ deep academic development. The new standards are more rigorous and demanding than prior educational standards in the U.S. in order to meet the more sophisticated requirements of the twenty-first century (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2012). These standards articulate high level goals for learning in the key disciplines, and new requirements focus on students’ gaining deep understandings of concepts within those disciplines as well as the ability to analyze, problem solve and communicate ideas within and across domains of knowledge. The implications for language use and development in academic learning may seem obvious, but how to support that development in all students is clearly a new realm of knowledge and practice for teachers in the U.S. (Valdés, Kibler, & Walqui, 2014).

The adoption of the new standards has raised alarms about the particular needs of ELLs and how to support their academic development at a level that will enable them to achieve the new and higher standards for learning. The *Understanding Language Initiative* at Stanford University was created in recent years to “heighten awareness of the language and literacy issues embedded within the new standards” (Understanding Language website). Given the increasing linguistic diversity of student populations across the U.S., concerned education leaders have coalesced this group specifically to address the new challenges that the new standards represent, especially for bilingual students and ELLs, the fastest growing segment of the school-aged population (Gwynne, Pareja, Ehrlich, & Allensworth, 2012). As noted by Pompa and Hakuta (2012), “[W]hile ELLs constitute more than ten percent of the nation’s total public school population, ELL student enrollment has increased at nearly seven times the rate of total student enrollment.” As ELLs with a wide range of proficiency are part not only of bilingual and ESL classrooms but also of mainstream classrooms across the U.S., it is clear that all teachers need support for how to implement rigorous curriculum, instruction and assessment in all the academic content areas.

A focus on the quality of education offered ELLs would also benefit all students whose English language experience has been limited and who are likely to struggle with the more rigorous curricula. Studies of achievement gaps continue to conclude



that, even prior to the adoption of the higher standards, disparities across income and racial groups persist, with Latino, Black and American Indian groups' proficiency rates remaining substantially lower than those of White and Asian students. While most states have improved slightly in achievement between 2003 and 2015, few states have narrowed achievement gaps (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The increasing presence of students in all classrooms who will need support for academic language development reiterates the level of demand for new knowledge and skill among teachers.

### 2.3 *The Chicago Project*

In 2014–2015, The Language Development and Disciplinary Learning project was developed in Chicago in response to prior work of several universities working with districts to improve instruction in the disciplines of English, Mathematics and Science. Over time through those efforts, participants realized the limitations of their knowledge as well as the knowledge and skill of the teachers with whom they were working regarding how to support ELLs and all students with limited experience in academic language and the language of instruction in schools.

In Chicago's public schools, ELLs typically comprise nearly a fifth of the district's total enrollment (Migration Policy Institute, 2010). Furthermore, as many as thirty percent of students in the entire district have been designated as ELLs at some point while enrolled in the district (Gwynne et al., 2012). Nonetheless, most teachers remain largely unprepared to support ELLs' development of disciplinary knowledge and uses of English (Bunch, 2013). In light of demands for higher order teaching and learning goals represented in the new standards, attention to building the capacity of educators to support language development in the context of their teaching of the core subjects is fundamental to the success of this national school reform effort.

The work in Chicago evolved into a series of institutes that convened university partners and school system leaders to address this gap by developing their own knowledge and understanding about language development and its interconnectedness with learning in the disciplines, its implications for major shifts in instruction and assessment, and how to support that knowledge and the needed shifts in teaching in schools. Supported by The Chicago Community Trust,<sup>3</sup> the local community foundation, the partnership engaged the expert leadership of the Quality Teaching for English Learners initiative at WestEd<sup>4</sup> to guide the exploration, investigation and

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<sup>3</sup>The Chicago Community Trust is a community foundation dedicated to improving the region through strategic grant making, civic engagement, and inspiring philanthropy. This project was supported by the Searle Funds at the Trust.

<sup>4</sup>WestEd is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research, development and service agency based in San Francisco that works with education and other communities throughout the U.S. and abroad to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) is a professional development program at WestEd that improves the capacity of teachers to support the linguistic, conceptual, and academic development of adolescent English learners. Its offerings include sustained work with districts and schools as well as open enrollment institutes.

development of this new knowledge that is imperative in schools. The next section of this paper will address the substantive knowledge and strategies for professional learning implemented in the institutes that brought together multiple university partners and school system curriculum leaders in literacy, social science, mathematics and science.

### **3 New Learning Required of Educators: Knowledge and Practice about Language and Learning**

#### ***3.1 Language and Literacy Development as an Intellectual Act***

A consequence of considering teachers primarily as technicians in the U.S. is that their continuing development is focused too often on the delivering of new strategies for implementing in their classrooms, absent the opportunity to thoughtfully consider the underlying purpose of the activities and the relationship of those practices to theories about teaching and learning in which those practices may or may not be grounded. As noted by Gordon and O'Brien (2007), the relationship between theory and practice appears as a challenge even during the initial years of teacher education when, as they report, novice teachers ask how they should apply the theories they are learning to the problems they confront in their classrooms. Embedded in this question, the authors note, is not only a "concern about the relevance of theory to practice but also a serious misconception about what it means to apply a theory to a practical situation" (xi). Even though singularly bold efforts<sup>5</sup> have been made in recent years in teacher education programs to demonstrate that the work of teaching (as with any profession) functions "in the space between theory and practice" (Gordon & O'Brien, 2007), the manner in which the work of teaching has been defined in reality as a semi-profession (Mehta, 2013), as discussed earlier in this paper, is a context that endures with significant impact on teachers' learning.

Practicing teachers, moreover, typically receive limited and disjointed professional development (Goldenberg, 2008; Lucas, 2010; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009) where practical ideas presented – although presented as "research-proven" – are not theoretically organized and are frequently used without a review of the relevant paradigms that support them or the research conducted around them. The result is classes in which teachers present their English language learners with disjointed exercises and where the emphasis often ends up being placed on grammatical accuracy. Within a 50-minute class, it is not atypical to observe the use of worksheets

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<sup>5</sup>A case in point is the major restructuring of teacher education at Loyola University Chicago, one of the university partners in this initiative. The four year teacher education program was completely redesigned to embed constant reflection on the relationship between teaching practices and theories of human development, language development, learning, and discipline-based learning, among others, that are reflected or not in those practices – in order ultimately to build thoughtful practitioners with the professional knowledge that would enable them to make professional decisions about their work.

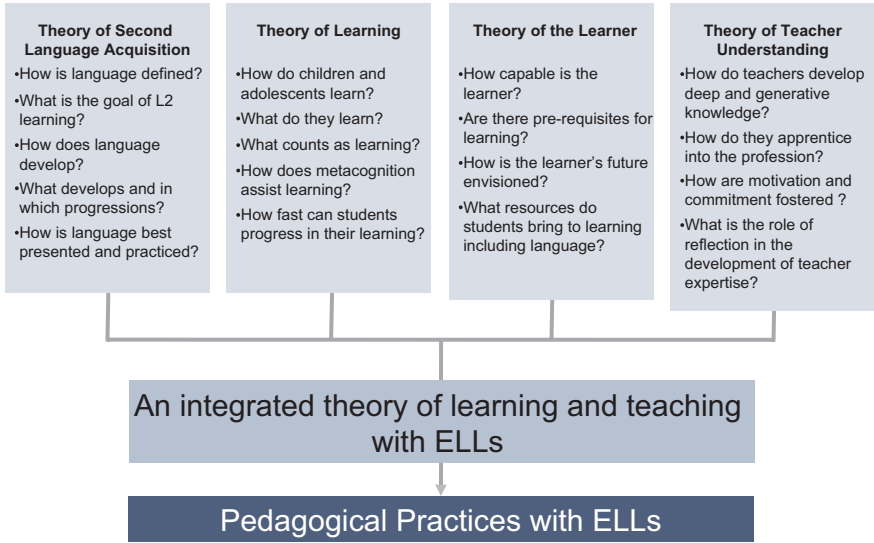
focused on grammatical items to be completed individually, memorization of lists of isolated vocabulary items, and computer work where students in “game-like” activities are asked to respond by clicking as rapidly as possible whether individual words are correctly spelled or not. These are the contents of materials given teachers to teach, which they typically teach without having the time or support to question and without having a clear rationale for their use. At a higher level of school organizations, it is common to find school principals purchasing materials and professional development sessions that have been sold to them as “research based” and “containing the best and most current knowledge.” Since they are unaware of theories driving these offerings, however, they end up providing their teachers with books and workshops which are contradictory. Similar situations occur in subject matter areas beyond language development.

Within this context, it was the intention of this project in Chicago to work with educators from universities who prepare and work with teachers, with a goal of helping them explore the basis for their own actions and for shifting their expertise. The goal and process would entail developing their knowledge about language development and its connections to all school learning in diverse disciplines and their ability to apply it in contingent ways within their professional development programs. Ultimately, the goal would be for them to implement this same process of learning with teachers, focusing the content on the special new subject area demands of graduating all categories of ELLs with deep knowledge and twenty-first century skills.

### ***3.2 The Importance of Theory***

Whether consciously or unconsciously, teachers possess ideas that inform their instructional decisions. That is, teachers’ perceptions of learners and learning are guided by theoretical understandings, although they might or might not be able to articulate them. These understandings direct their choice of what, when, and how to teach. Broadly defined, a theory is a more or less abstract set of claims about the units that are significant within a phenomenon under study, the relationships that exist among them, and the processes that bring about change. At a minimum, theories guide descriptions, but stronger theories explain why something happens as it does or help to predict what will happen as a consequence of specific actions. Educators involved in English language teaching must be able to coherently explain what they are teaching and how they develop it, determine why certain activities help learners to develop English but others do not, and predict the consequences of pedagogical actions with ELLs.

In the case of English language teaching, a preliminary review was completed by the WestEd leadership of this work. That review, limited to those theories that have most heavily influenced trends in current language teaching, discusses each theory’s assumptions regarding the elements proposed to constitute language and the L2 learning process before describing teaching approaches and methods aligned with each. For purposes of analysis, the field of teaching English as a second language is mapped into four main strands, or approaches, to Second Language Acquisition



**Fig. 1** Theories informing teachers’ practices in language teaching (Walqui, revised from: Heritage et al., 2015)

(SLA) that have traditionally influenced language teaching (formal, cognitive, functional, and sociocultural) – with the knowledge that these strands do overlap to some degree. WestEd also explored the potential of new developments in bilingualism and SLA theory to influence future language education.

The work of this project thus started with the premise that in order to be impactful, and at the same time increase the professionalization of teachers, it was necessary to work on participants’ theoretical awareness, and the importance of having coherent theories undergirding pedagogy. Thus, participant university and district leaders were invited to reflect on the theories informing their own practice. Figure 1 presents a graphic organizer used to help participants identify and articulate key theoretical components in their approaches to their work in teacher education and/or professional development. The discussion on theory was not decontextualized, but rather focused on the theory-practice link, and on the consistency or inconsistency of teaching approaches. In initial sessions, participants discussed books and articles, viewed videos of teachers in action, experienced segments of lessons, and reviewed pedagogical materials to respond to the questions in the diagram based on the evidence observed. Participants then determined whether practices observed fit within one theoretical approach to the development of language or whether they actually belonged to two different ways of promoting the acquisition of that language. As a result of these exercises and ensuing conversations, participants – who varied in levels of awareness of their praxis – came to see the value of discussing theory, and how it played a reciprocal role in their educational activity: theory guiding practice, and practice informing and refining theory.

From a conceptualization of	To understanding
Language acquisition as an individual process	→ Language acquisition as a social process of apprenticeship that takes place in social contexts
Language as structures or functions	→ Language as action, subsuming structure and function (Ellis, N. & Larsen-Freeman, D., 2010; van Lier & Walqui, 2012)
Language acquisition as implying the linear and progressive building on forms and structures, or functions, aimed at accuracy, fluency, and complexity	→ Non linear and complex developmental process aimed at communication and comprehension
Use of individual ideas or texts as the center of instruction	→ Attention to ideas in their interrelatedness, and teaching units as a cluster of lessons centered on texts that are interconnected by purpose and/or theme
Use of simple and/or simplified texts	→ Use of complex, amplified texts for all students
Use of activities that pre-teach the content, or simply "help students get through texts"	→ Activities that scaffold students' development and their autonomy, so that the knowledge gained will assist them in generating new understandings on their own in the future
Identifying discrete structural features of language	→ Exploration of how language is purposeful and patterned to do its particular rhetorical work
Traditional grammar as a starting point for students to know about language	→ Multimodal grammar as necessary to support students' understanding of the visual, spatial, gestural, audio and linguistic meanings of texts
Objectives stated as dichotomies (such as "content objectives" and "language objectives")	→ Objectives revolve around ways of engaging in academic practices, communicating, doing, and being by using language for different audiences and purposes
Teacher use of standardized or pre-fabricated tests to guide instruction	→ Instruction guided by assessment of students' participation in activity, and a determination of how they need to be supported next to develop in deep and generative ways.

**Fig. 2** Reconceptualization of language development in education Walqui, 2014, *Understanding language initiative*

### 3.3 *Shifts in Practice Grounded in Theory*

Once theories were explored and their impact on teacher practices and student performance uncovered, the group was introduced to the changes in stances and practices, following the *Understanding Language Initiative* agreements (See Fig. 2). These shifts represent major reconsiderations of how language development is typically conceived and acted upon in schools toward new understandings of the deep connections between language development and learning. What follows are some of the major shifts assumed from the Stanford initiative that guided the Chicago institutes.

*Language Acquisition Conceived as Apprenticeship in Social Contexts* The argument moves away from a conceptualization of language acquisition as an entirely individual process, instead understanding it to be a process of apprenticeship that takes place in social contexts (Block, 2003; Walqui & van Lier, 2010). In this view, apprenticeship entails being socialized into the kinds of practices that full members of a community share and by which they are defined. Learning these ways of

thinking, behaving, talking, reading, writing is promoted by well-constructed interactions that lead to students' language development. The teacher's responsibility is to model membership behaviors and to invite students to practice language in action to derive understandings about concepts and communication. A teacher who possesses expertise does not attempt to "teach" all of the components of language or of subject matter content; rather, the teacher plans robust and flexible opportunities for students to engage in activity, and through their engagement students will appropriate the practices. Over time they will be able to transfer these practices in appropriate ways in new contexts.

Several corollaries follow from this shift:

- Students do not only learn language as they develop English, but they also learn conceptual understandings, analytical and language practices at the same time (Valdés, Kibler, & Walqui, 2014). This goes against notions very prevalent in American classrooms that knowing English is a pre-requisite for engagement in disciplinary learning.
- It is not the case that teachers need to have students with the same level of command of the language of instruction in their classes. In a process of apprenticeship, learners engage with others in tasks that have multiple entry points and provide them with different pathways to develop both language and the literacy and academic practices called for by the standards (Walqui & van Lier, 2010).
- Students need to be offered carefully constructed opportunities to work in groups of two, three, or four to foster simultaneous social engagement by all students in a class, thus promoting their development of conceptual, academic, and pragmatic competence, while providing the kind of affordances necessary for developing the language required to perform these academic practices (van Lier, 2004).
- Scaffolding is defined as the supports specifically designed to induce students' development and increasing autonomy. They are not merely any "help" provided to students to assist them in completing a momentary task but rather they function as ripeners of potential. Based on Vygotsky's notion of activity in the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978), Bruner and Sherwood (1976) offered scaffolding as a metaphor for the "just right" kind of support that teachers design to facilitate students' movement beyond their current state of development. The goal with this kind of support is to make students' knowledge *generative*, so that they can use it in the future to support new learning (Gibbons, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2009; Walqui & van Lier, 2010).

*Language Acquisition Implies a Nonlinear Developmental Process Aimed at Communication and Comprehension* Traditionally in applied linguistics and still today in education it has been assumed that languages developed along a progression of linguistic forms that lead students from hypothesized simpler to increasingly more complex sentence structures until "mastery" of the language is acquired. Then, during the communicative revolution, and especially after work on English for Academic Purposes, experimentation was carried out on progressions that met learners' communicative needs, not linear grammatical progressions, with remark-



able success. Some of these approaches used students' native languages to engage in what at the time was called "learner training" – that is the metacognitive teaching of learning strategies to students so that they apply them consciously during their own learning experience and deliberately build robust learning dispositions. The leaders of this work strongly feel that this experience can be successfully translated into the teaching of ELLs in American schools, especially starting in 4th grade (Derewianka, 2014; Schleppegrell, 2011).

In beginning courses, for example, students could be apprised of what it takes to understand the purpose and organization of a text by perusing it first and learning to notice key details, such as introductions (Does the author say he is going to tell a personal story? to describe a process? to explain why something is valuable? etc.). They could also focus on the words that link ideas. Do the students find words that refer to sequences such as *first, then, after that*, in which case the text may contain instructions or a narrative of events? Assuming this shift implies that:

- Complex ideas and texts beyond students' comprehension can be part of the students' curriculum if a clear focus for engagement is set (they do not need to understand everything, but key ideas pre-set for them) and if they are taught to tolerate ambiguity and learn to guess with increasing levels of accuracy (Rubin, 1975).
- English language development courses are not "curricularized" (Valdés, 2002), that is, they are not considered as courses where one curricular component requires "mastery" by all students before the class can move to the next topic in the syllabus. Currently, students who do not master the content of an ESL II course, for example, do not advance to ESL III. This work in this project concurs with Valdés, that it is more important for students to engage in the discussion, reading, and writing of valuable subject matter ideas albeit with 'flawed' English. Not only will students be more willing to pay attention to their own linguistic performance to improve it if others listen and take into account their thoughts. They will also be developing important deep and transferable skills, including their paying attention to their own language production over time.
- Teachers will need to shift their immediate reaction away from correct form in their students' productions, focusing more on what the students are doing and whether ideas are logically and compellingly presented.
- Acceptance of translanguaging in the class. English Language Learners, as García (2009) and García and Wei (2014) point out, are not students in the process of developing a second language. They are emergent bilinguals, and as such deserve the right to fluidly use their two evolving languages at the service of learning without fearing that the teacher may misinterpret their actions.

*Focus Should Be on the Design of Lessons in Which Attention Is Paid to Ideas in Their Interrelatedness* In learning units the focus should be placed on the development of a cluster of lessons centered around texts that are interconnected by purpose, by theme, or both. This shift emphasizes the promotion of deep learning, characterized by a simultaneous focus on the essential elements of a concept or

theme, their interconnections, and student engagement in higher order thinking. Teaching that progresses atomistically from one point to the other, without weaving in the relatedness of these concepts, nor helping students understand the structure of knowledge in a domain, leads to superficial understandings, that is, understandings which are shallow and consequently inert. Deep learning, on the other hand, links ideas into constellations of understandings that are interrelated and form the conceptual structures of a field. With these schemata in their minds, students are able to generate new understandings since pre-existing mental structures serve as anchors for new knowledge. This type of knowledge is robust and generative. Some of the corollaries emerging from this shift include:

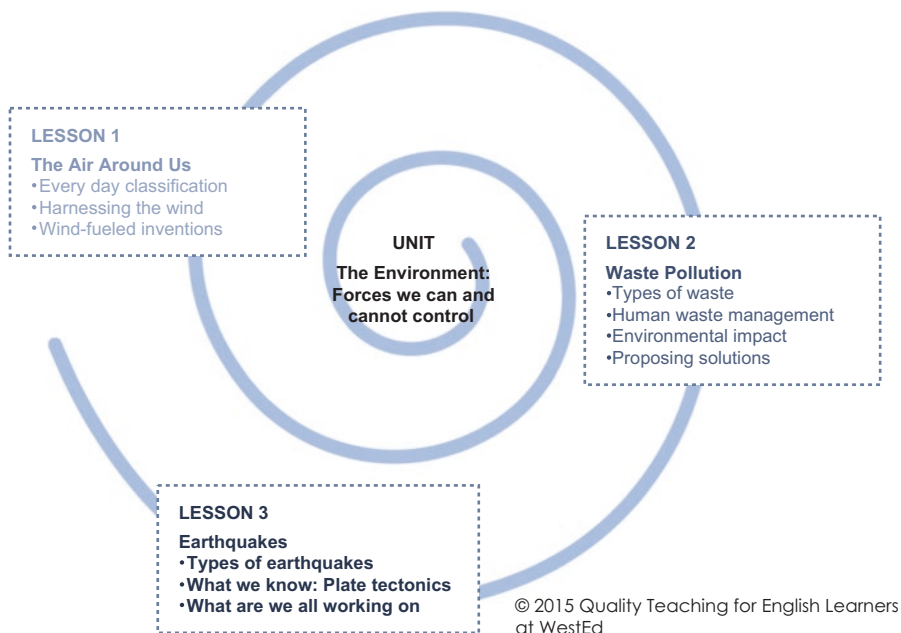
- The need for teachers to learn lesson and unit design in well-scaffolded ways. This provides an opportunity for the development of teacher professionalism as they work collaboratively in unit design, not in isolation, and have to articulate the reason for their choices in the process – becoming increasingly aware of the value of theories.
- Teachers and students will be able to realize that if units are well structured, the first lesson will take students to some central understandings and abilities to communicate which will be revisited and expanded in following lessons as the theme is presented through other contexts. In one unit (Fig. 3) for the Beginning ESL class, for example, students focus on the environment, forces human beings can control and cannot control yet. In the first lesson students read, write, view brief videos, and talk extensively about the wind. As is observed in Fig. 4, the standards addressed in this lesson are also going to be the same as those addressed in Lessons 2 and 3. In the first lesson – with each lesson taking about 6 class periods to complete – students will understand a bit (including the genre of informational texts, its purposes, organization, and preferred language). After lesson 3 students will be much more competent and confident in their ability to deal with different informational text types and they will know quite a bit about the environment.

The Appendix includes a lesson – written by QTEL at WestEd which models a unit on persuasion developed for the *Understanding Language* Initiative to demonstrate how ELLs at the intermediate level of proficiency can read, if adequately supported, texts as complex as those of Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy, and George Wallace.

Throughout this process, deep knowledge construction is predicated on spiraling and increasing encounters with linked ideas and texts, each new encounter enhancing understandings, skills, and the language required to engage in those practices. This is true for everybody, but for students learning sophisticated content via the medium of a language that is in the process of development, these links are essential. They provide moments of recognition and solidity that enable learners to tolerate ambiguity and develop their skills to be willing and accurate guessers (Rubin, 1975). This is why the unit on persuasion revisits the genre and theme time and time again, each time at a higher level of complexity, each time enabling students to see



## Beginning ESL 6th grade unit Macro Scaffolding 1: Unit Design



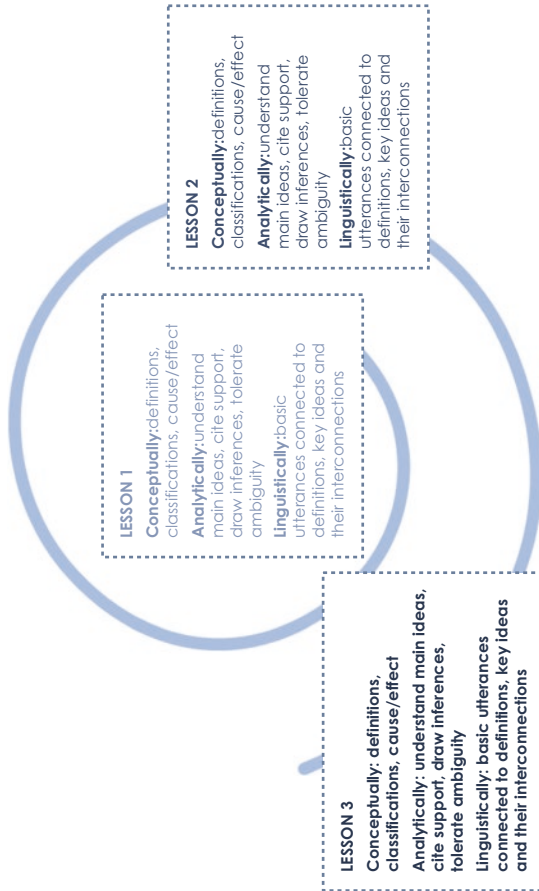
**Fig. 3** Spiraling Design for a beginning ESL Unit

how much they have developed and how much more autonomous they have become. At the same time, because the texts are sophisticated and the tasks engaging and autonomy-fostering through metacognitive engagement, they are equally good for other students who are native speakers of English.

It is possible that the approach advocated for in this work will strike some educators as a radical departure from ways in which they have been encouraged to focus “explicitly” on language for ELLs: that is, through “curricularizing” language (Valdés, Capitelli, & Alvarez, 2011) so that the focus of instruction is on the systematic mastery of prescribed and ordered grammatical features, vocabulary, or “functions” of language. Indeed, there is a long and pervasive tradition in language teaching of working with “bits and pieces” of language. In many classes, sentences are focused on in isolation of each other; in other classes texts are worked on holistically but in ways that are disconnected from other texts or central curricular themes.

Indeed, a persistent question in second language learning is whether students should be explicitly taught how language functions formally, or if they should learn the language system inductively. The *Persuasion Across Time and Space* exemplar is built on the assumption that this question presents a false dichotomy. Students’ perceptions, actions and interpretations, as well as their identity and agency, can be

### An ESL 1 Example of Shifts in Instructional Unit Design



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Fig. 4 Recurrence of goals as stated in the science standards for sixth grade

engaged directly for the purpose of raising their awareness of how language works to perform specific functions without relegating language instruction to an endeavor sealed off from the academic practices at the core of an ELA curriculum in general or the Standards in particular.

Central to this work is the argument that attention to the language necessary for engagement with the Standards is appropriate – and that such a focus is most productively achieved through scaffolding that provides evolving opportunities for ELLs to use and develop language in apprenticeships in communities of practice that ultimately leads toward their autonomy. The kinds of scaffolds necessary for fostering both awareness and developing use of English will vary depending on many features of the context and of students' backgrounds. In all cases, students' initial engagements will be peripheral, imperfect, pale versions of the kind of interactions they will eventually be able to negotiate. However, if ELLs' early participation is accompanied by modeling of what accomplished practice is, and by the scaffolds that will support students' movement from novice to expert, then accomplished, autonomous performance will be achieved. Of course, what today matures also leaves room for practices that are on the verge of ripening as well as those that are more incipient and in need of deliberate and expert nurturing. In this sense, scaffolding entails handing over of responsibility by teachers or peers while simultaneously new supports are provided to develop other aspects of the learner's construction zone, a term Newman, Griffin, and Cole (1989) use to refer to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1978), the area where all instruction must take place and where development will be constructed next.

The work undertaken here sought to expand educators' expertise (knowledge and the ability to enact it in situated practice) to move them beyond a narrow focus on English language acquisition and undertake the simultaneous development of disciplinary concepts, analytical practices, and the language required to express them. In the case of English language teaching, there has been a long history of engaging learners in the solution of "content-based" problems as ways of developing English proficiency, specifically through the use of tasks (Candlin & Murphy, 1987; Long & Crookes, 1992). However, these calls for "authenticity" in curriculum led to a focus on the development of components of the English language and not the subject matter area, an important concern during schooling.

One final concern remains, and that is, what counts as proficiency in English for English Language Learners. While in the past it was argued that the model was native speaker proficiency, that proposition has been challenged by many, as indeed it was also challenged by the group who undertook this work. May (2014) refers to these changes in perspective as the multilingual turn in applied linguistics that is a natural consequence of the increasingly globalized world in which the teaching of English is now taking place. According to May (2014) and Ortega (2014), dissatisfaction with and concern about the tendency to view individuals acquiring a L2 as failed native speakers has been present in SLA and in the English language teaching profession for some time.

## 4 Impact

### 4.1 *Preliminary Impact*

This initial year of work with multiple universities and school district leaders across the core disciplines provoked thoughtful discussion and challenging questions about the participants' current work and its need for major revisions concerning teaching and the professional development of teachers. In particular, major consensus emerged among participants that new approaches are needed to engage all students in higher order thinking and learning – with language development being a central part of that learning – not only to provide greater access to ELLs but also to support the development of all students' learning. The issues raised by the QTEL leaders concerning typical current practices and policies that isolate the learning of language from disciplinary learning resonated with participants as problematic and in need of innovative solutions.

The focus on theories that drive instruction became of increasing interest as members explored the impact of those theories on their own practice as well as the practices of teachers with whom they work. Discipline-based learning and disciplinary pedagogy had been the primary focus of their work and the arena of change on which they had been working to align teaching with the learning goals of the new standards in their respective disciplines. Considering the theories of learning that influence teaching became an effective base from which to question the role of language in learning, an arena of knowledge that was new to many of them. New challenges began to emerge in discussions about the implications of these stances and theories about language development and how they might incorporate this knowledge into their pedagogical frameworks within the disciplines.

Finally, participants quickly recognized that the shifts in teaching underlying the work of QTEL, although focused originally on supporting ELLs, have deep implications for teaching all students more effectively.

### 4.2 *Evidence of Initial Shifts in Practice*

The impact of the institutes and of these new frameworks for thinking about the role of language in learning has been initially to challenge participants' thinking about traditional practices in teaching and in their own professional development strategies. Among the changes already underway as a result of the institutes are the following:

1. *Articulation of major changes needed in teacher education and development.* Participants have begun to rethink fundamental changes needed to support these new frameworks for teaching, including shifts in school level structures to support continuous learning of teachers and exchanges within and across disciplines; work on discipline-specific applications; new models of instruction and

planning that incorporate language development in learning; recognition of strengths and assets of ELLs; fundamental rethinking about differentiated learning, and incorporation of this knowledge into the teacher preparation programs at participants' higher education institutions.

2. *Consideration of language development as a wedge for improving teaching.* Although most participants acknowledged that most of their teachers as well as they themselves knew little about language learning, second language learning or its embeddedness in all learning, they began to see its far-reaching implications. Participants continuously expressed the importance and usefulness of exemplars of the new practices being suggested.
3. *Reframing of practice guides to support ELLs in Literacy.* Literacy leaders at the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) made significant changes in their supports to schools. These CPS teams created documents that articulate new tenets about language development and learning that need to be considered in all planning and instruction. These documents are made available to all schools and were embedded in the central office professional development sessions in the year following the institutes.
4. *Reports from the field.* As members began to take these ideas back to their teams and the teachers and principals with whom they were working, initial feedback was typically positive about the ways in which these shifts in teaching are engaging students in purposeful discourse in a variety of discipline areas.

The implications of these considerations about language learning for educational policy and practice are wide-ranging and suggest the need for re-thinking programming for ELLs; redesigning instruction to address simultaneous conceptual, analytic and language development; addressing the need for all teachers' learning and apprenticeship concerning these major shifts in teaching; and the initial preparation of teachers for urban schools.

## 5 Conclusion

The work of rethinking teaching to include attention to language development to better support ELLs and all students at high levels of learning is in its beginning stages in the U.S. This project aimed to link knowledge about language learning and policies regarding language education to improvements in practice. The way in which ideas will lead to improved practice is by such collaborations between research and practice communities that address all aspects of relevant knowledge, including knowledge about language development and learning. Out of this kind of partnership, practice solutions and policies that support all learners can emerge which are grounded in the best knowledge available.

## Appendix

### *Persuasion Across Time and Space Unit (Walqui, Koelsch, & Schmida, 2012)*

To suggest what instruction meeting the new demands of the Common Core Standards might look like in practice, a middle school (grades 6–8 in the United States) English language arts unit was developed focused on persuasive texts, *Persuasion Across Time and Space: Reading and Producing Complex Texts*. Created to speak to teaching practices realizing the academic potential of English language learners in Common Core Standards-based classrooms, the unit provides a model for either mainstream ELA classrooms – which in the U.S. increasingly include heterogeneous groups of students classified as ELLs and students who are either native English speakers or classified as English-proficient – or for “sheltered” ELA classrooms. The curricular example may also be appropriate for ESOL classes at the intermediate level or above.

The unit, which features five multiple-day lessons detailed below, was created to encompass 50-minute daily periods over an approximately five to six week time frame. The lesson sequence follows a “spiraled” curriculum, meaning that as students engage with persuasive rhetoric, they move from more familiar forms of persuasion to more complex and historically situated forms, thus deepening their knowledge of the topic as they progress through the lessons.

- Lesson 1: As an introduction, students explore the use of persuasion in advertising. Engaging with a variety of media, students examine advertisements’ use of emotional appeal to interest readers and persuade them to take action. Through multimodal text analysis of modality, word meaning, and nuance, students evaluate the point of view, purpose, and intended audience effect of each advertisement. Finally, students determine central ideas of advertisement texts and cite specific evidence to support their textual analysis.
- Lesson 2: Through a close reading of the “Gettysburg Address,” students deepen their understanding and analysis of persuasive techniques. After first reading background texts about Lincoln’s famous speech to build schema about the time, place, and political context of the event, students then have multiple opportunities to examine and interact with the “Gettysburg Address.” From this reading, students gain a broader understanding of key ideas in Lincoln’s message, as well as examine micro-level elements such as cohesive and coherence ties. To synthesize their overall understanding of Lincoln’s message, students conclude the lesson by translating the “Gettysburg Address” into “modern” English.
- Lesson 3: Using Aristotle’s Three Appeals, students analyze how the rhetorical devices used in the text persuade a reader or audience to take a particular action or identify with a specific cause. Using their learning from this exercise, students critically analyze three speeches—Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream,” Robert Kennedy’s “On the Assassination of Martin Luther King,” and George Wallace’s “The Civil Rights Movement: Fraud, Sham, and Hoax” representing a broad spectrum of historical positions on civil rights in the United States.

- Lesson 4: Students collaboratively analyze the structural, organizational, grammatical, and lexical choices made in Barbara Jordan’s “All Together Now” to examine how authors construct persuasive texts at both macro and micro levels. To prepare to write their own speeches at the conclusion of the unit, students discuss these micro- and macro- elements with a younger middle school audience.
- Lesson 5: To demonstrate their appropriation of the knowledge and skills learned from the past several weeks of study, students independently analyze a persuasive speech and write their own persuasive texts. Assuming the role of one of the authors studied in the unit and analyzing his/her text, students first consolidate their knowledge of the deliberate use of persuasive devices. Next, students analyze a persuasive speech authored by someone close to their own age. The unit culminates with students drawing on the techniques learned in the unit to construct their own persuasive texts.

The lessons referenced above provide multiple opportunities to activate and build upon students’ background knowledge of popular persuasive appeals. Each lesson develops and refines students’ understanding of the principles of persuasion, spiraling from more familiar to progressively complex tasks. Because each lesson is subsumed into the next, lessons form a coherent, connected whole rather than “stand alone” sets of activities.

Diagrams: The first diagram (Fig. 5) represents the new standards for English Language Arts which constitute the goal of this unit intended for the 6–8 grade

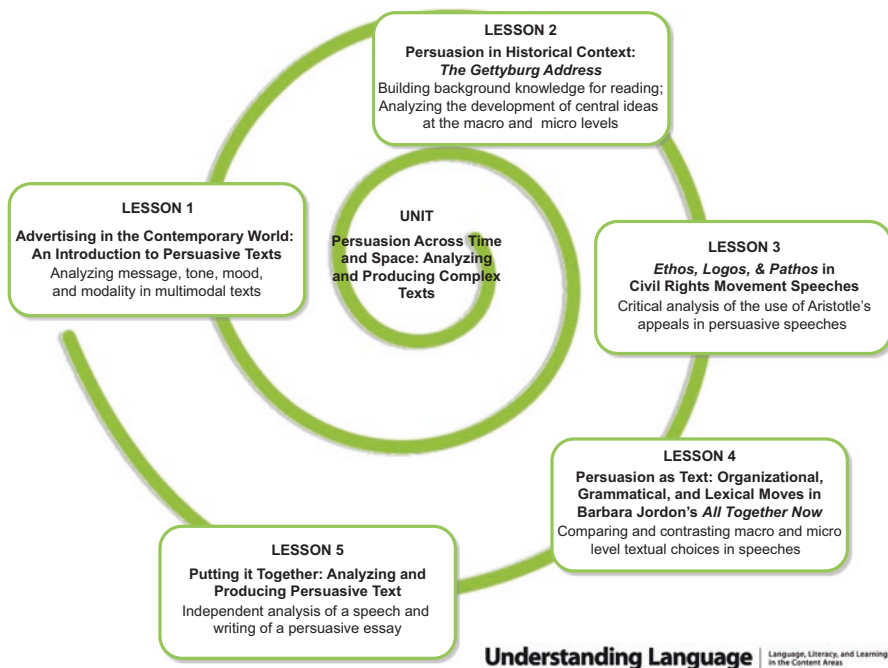
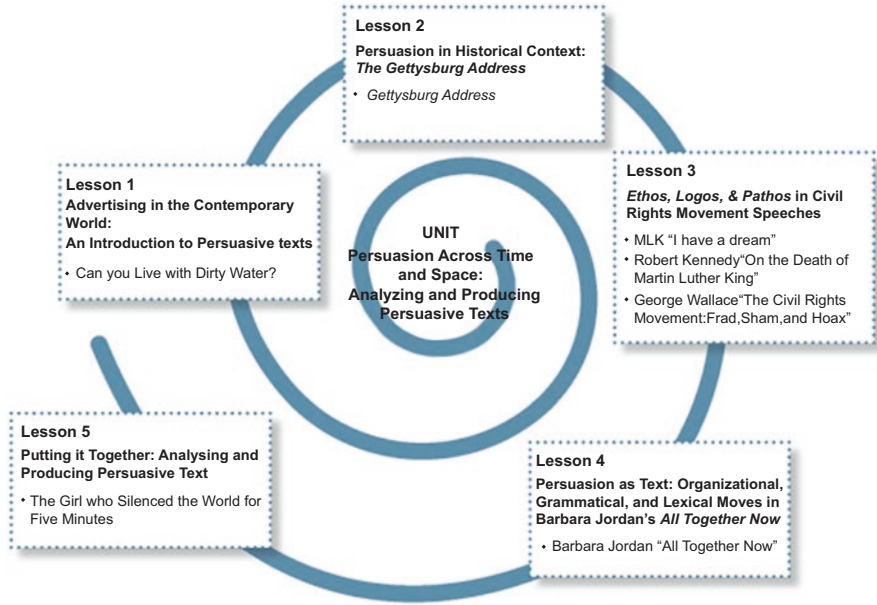


Fig. 5 New standards for English Language Arts as addressed in Persuasion Unit





**Understanding Language** | Language, Literacy, and Learning in the content Areas

Fig. 6 Multimodal texts used in Persuasion Unit

level. They all apply to the genre of persuasion. The second diagram (Fig. 6) presents some of the multimodal texts used in the unit.

These diagrams are from *Persuasion Across Time and Space: Analyzing and Producing Complex Texts*, a Unit developed by WestEd’s Teacher Professional Development Program for the *Understanding Language Initiative*. Accessed at ell.stanford.edu.

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**Part II**  
**Higher Education**

# Shaping a Danish Multilingual University's Language Policy: Gatekeepers and Drivers of Change



Anne Holmen

**Abstract** Within the last decade, many universities in non-Anglophone Europe have developed new language policies in order to sharpen their international profile. Since 2008, the University of Copenhagen has been guided by a parallel language strategy aiming at a balance between English and the national language Danish. In addition, the university has recently decided to develop a new strategy which introduces several other languages as potentially relevant for students in their academic programs and when they target the Danish or the international labor market. At an institutional level this is seen as a way of promoting quality of programs and securing the university's position in the international market. However, neither all languages nor all four language skills are equally important for all purposes. Therefore a careful needs analysis is an important first step in order to decide which languages and language skills to include in the actual planning. At the University of Copenhagen the needs analyses involve students as well as instructors and members of study boards. These different participants in the academic community are often motivated by different perspectives on teaching and learning issues, e.g., on curricular priorities and traditions, but also hold individual preferences. Based on a language-in-education perspective, this paper will focus on the different organizational levels involved when developing and implementing a new language strategy and the possible alignments and mismatches between these levels. As an example it will look at the role of the French and German languages as mentioned by different stakeholders and compare this with the situation for English.

**Keywords** Drivers of change · Gatekeepers · Language-in-education · Language needs analysis · Parallel Language Use · University of Copenhagen

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## 1 Parallel Language Use as Policy and Practice

Many universities in non-Anglophone Europe have developed new language policies as a response to internationalization of higher education and academia (Extra & Yagmur, 2012; Cots, Llorca, & Garrett, 2014). They are motivated by increased mobility among faculty and students and the widening use of English in teaching as well as research, but also by a concern for the role of the national languages in academia. In the Nordic countries, the balance between English and the national languages is often discussed under the heading of parallel language use. The concept was introduced around the turn of the century in Swedish language debates (Jónsson, Laurén, Myking, & Picht, 2013) and appeared as a key term in the Nordic Declaration of Language Policy, issued by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2006. According to the Declaration, the term refers to the simultaneous use of two (or more) languages within a geographical area, an institutional space or a functional domain, and a language policy based on this principle aims at stabilizing and developing both languages involved so that one will not replace the other. Thus Nordic parallel language use is both a descriptive term referring to language use in the region and a strategic term referring to institutional language policy. It has been particularly influential within university language policies, but this is also where it has been met with criticism because of its conceptual vagueness (e.g., Jónsson et al. 2013; Linn, 2010) and for lack of clarity about the interface and power relations between the languages involved (e.g., Preisler, 2009). It has also been criticized for drawing on nativeness ideologies (e.g., Kuteeva, 2014) and more than anything for ignoring language use in practice (Bolton & Kuteeva, 2012; Mortensen, 2014; Thøgersen, 2010). Although acknowledging the relevance of the criticism levelled against the concept, Gregersen, Josephson, Godenhjelm, and Londen (2014) chose to use it as a cover term in a recent comprehensive report on the language situation at Nordic universities. In the introduction to the report Gregersen and Josephson argue that universities in the region take “the use of parallel languages as a given, but that its different configurations are up for discussion” (2014, p. 25 my translation). By this, they also propose a shift from a focus on language status and academic domain loss to an approach dealing with language use, learning and teaching in practice, i.e., for a language-in-education policy (Liddicoat, 2013) focusing on the balance between English and the national language(s).

The balance between the two languages is characterized by both change and stability in the university sector. On the one hand, there are many signs of academic anglicization taking place: a recent survey has shown that the Nordic countries are now among the European leaders in providing English-taught programs to international as well as domestic university students (Wächter & Maiworm, 2014), and that there has been a remarkably sharp increase since the turn of the century. In addition, Nordic research is highly influenced by the use of English, especially in international networks, research publications and dissemination at conferences, and the number of internationally recruited members of faculty is continually going up (e.g., Hultgren, 2014). This reflects an international tendency within academia of using English as the language of wider communication (Mortensen & Haberland, 2012). On the other hand, it seems that the move towards English is only part of the

picture. According to the report produced by Gregersen et al. (2014), the national languages have maintained a fairly strong position as medium-of-instruction at undergraduate level and in general within e.g., arts and health professions, but also as the language of university administration at all levels, of public outreach, and to some extent, of daily interaction among staff and students. Data shows that this is the case across all five Nordic countries and even within disciplines which, like science and technology, are most prone to accept a shift into English. According to the report, there seems to be a complex division of labor between the two languages in question and a need to maintain and develop both for academic purposes in the local contexts, i.e., at all relevant levels of the university (in the rector's office, at the faculty level, at the departmental level and for each individual lecturer/researcher). This may change over time, but with the data presented in the report the language situation at Nordic universities does not correspond to a classic diglossia with a sharp divide between a global language for the academy and a local language for e.g., citizenship or family. As suggested by, e.g., Kuteeva (2014) the introduction of the parallel language policy at Nordic universities was based on a situation where increased demands of academic English was in focus, but where it was also taken for granted that the university population mastered the national language at native speaker level. In policy terms, the goal was to bring in English in addition to the national language and not in replacement of this.

One aspect which is often ignored in the discussions for and against the concept of parallel language use is the role of other languages than English and the national language. Traditionally, other languages like French, German and Latin have also played a role in academic studies, and internationalization of universities and of the academic labor market could potentially lead to a demand for competence in e.g., Arabic, Mandarin or Spanish. To what extent the focus on parallel language use between English and the national language may also include other languages in a wider multilingual approach to language planning will be dealt with below in a case study from the University of Copenhagen (UCPH).

## 2 Methodology

This paper focuses on the process of developing a new multilingual strategy for UCPH from the first initiative over local negotiations to steps of implementation and evaluation. This is an instance of acquisition planning and of what Hult and Källkvist refer to as "language planning in local contexts" (2015, p. 6). It deals with what is locally relevant, even when bringing in languages used in wider communication across global contexts (May, 2015). The strategy aims at meeting differentiated language needs for students across the University through the development of teaching activities which either function as language support or through integration of language elements in content teaching. The goal is to develop teaching activities which are viewed as relevant and essential by the involved students as well as by representatives of their disciplines and which may eventually be integrated into the



different study programs. In order to identify which languages and which dimensions of language (e.g., specific skills) to focus on, detailed needs analyses are carried out among students as well as among program directors and members of study boards. The questions concern students' present and future needs for language competence as seen by the students themselves and by domain experts, but also as described in study programs and assessment procedures. Thus the needs analysis focuses on tasks which are either relevant during study-based learning activities or may influence the outcome of study abroad periods and the students' future job opportunities (Long, 2005). Students and domain experts represent their disciplines, but they are also often motivated by different perspectives on teaching and learning issues, e.g., on curricular priorities and traditions, and they hold individual preferences. Based on a language-in-education perspective, this paper will focus on these stakeholders and on the different organizational levels involved when developing and implementing a new language strategy and the possible alignments and mismatches between these levels. To follow Spolsky (2004, pp. 217–218), “language management remains a dream until it is implemented, and its potential for implementation depends in large measure on its congruity with the practices and ideology of the community”. The analyses of needs and opportunities for implementation are based on a combination of surveys and meetings across the University. The project team is responsible for collecting data through document analysis and surveys and for contacting all study boards and when necessary also faculty representatives and relevant decision-making fora at management level. At the time of writing, the team had carried out five surveys addressing approximately one third of the University's 40,000 students (and with approximately 2500 responses) and had organized more than 50 meetings. The present paper is based on minutes from meetings, notes and other textual documentation in addition to the survey reports (<http://cip.ku.dk/english/strategicinitiatives/languagestrategy/>), but also on my personal experience and reflections as manager of the team working on the project. The paper focuses not only on the content of the activities developed, but also on the process of development and on the identification of gatekeepers and drivers of change across the University. The analysis follows after two short paragraphs of contextual background.

### 3 Parallel Language Use at UCPH

UCPH was founded in Medieval Copenhagen in 1479, and until 1928 was the only university in Denmark. Today it is a research-based, public university with six faculties (Health and Medical Sciences, Humanities, Law, Science, Social Sciences and Theology) and altogether approximately 40,000 students (at BA and MA level) and 7000 employees (faculty, PhD students and administrative staff). As a number of other universities in non-Anglophone Europe, UCPH has introduced English-medium instruction and communication to attract and interact with international students and faculty, but at the same time Danish is also being used for instruction as well as most administrative purposes, and international students and faculty are

offered Danish tuition. Before English-medium instruction was introduced, UCPH was a predominantly monolingual Danish-medium university for 100–150 years with few exceptions (i.e., the teaching of foreign languages, classical as well as modern European, and the use of French and German for research publications alongside Danish).

UCPH was never officially a monolingual, bilingual or multilingual university, but it has always been “a site of multilingualism” (Preece, 2011) because of the multilingual background and practices of staff and students. As the only university in Denmark until 1928, it had attracted students from all parts of the country, including the Nordic regions which had been or still were under Danish rule at the time (parts of Schleswig, Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands). But even during the development of the smaller monolingual nation state in the nineteenth century, the Danish population was not monolingual. Multilingual individuals could be found among migrant groups, among professionals and in the academic elite in Copenhagen (Maegaard & Normann Jørgensen, 2015). Since then, European university collaboration and global mobility have brought speakers of many different languages to Denmark and UCPH. By 2009 almost 14% of all students and 12% of all newly recruited faculty members at UCPH had an international background, and both numbers have gone up since then (Hultgren, 2014). In a study on international faculty at UCPH, Jürna (2014) identified 34 languages in use among her 150 informants.

According to the report on parallel language use at Nordic universities (Gregersen, 2014), university management is often hesitant about implementing strong language policies, but also concerned with the clash between the discourse of internationalization through the use of English and the discourse of maintaining the use of the national language(s) for academic purposes. Some Nordic universities do this by promoting the concept of parallel language use in policy papers as “a kind of idealized linguistic power balance” (Hult & Källkvist, 2015) with no follow up activities. However, when the Board at the UCPH decided to refer to the “principle of parallel language use” in its 2008 strategic document (called *Destination 2012*), it also decided to establish and fund the University's Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use and later to initiate and fund a multilingual language strategy (see below). The principle of parallel language use was maintained in the University's next strategy, *Strategy 2016* (issued in 2012) and followed up by the establishment of a cross-faculty and central office committee to look into parallel language use in administration and in internal communication at UCPH. At the same time, a number of local initiatives were advanced to implement different aspects of the language policy at various levels of the university organization (deciding on e.g., medium-of-instruction or language of internal and external communication). Some of the initiatives have been a success, others have been met with criticism or neglect. This picture of UCPH as a complex organization with a certain investment in “the principle of parallel language use” at many levels and guided by many, sometimes conflicting, interests is the background for the analysis of the University's multilingual strategy, *More Languages for More Students*.

## 4 Adding an Additional Strategy

When the Board at UCPH decided to explicitly draw on “the principle of parallel language use” in *Destination 2012*, they added the following paragraph.

UCPH shall profit from the special opportunity of already carrying out research and teaching in a number of languages. Students must be given easily available opportunities to acquire competence in another foreign language and another culture than the Anglo-Saxon.

The document refers to the 40+ languages that were at that time taught through the University’s language programs or as elements of other study programs (e.g., Ancient Greek in the study of Theology or Philosophy). These languages are seen as potential resources in the language policy because of the availability of relevant teaching and research competence. This seems to be an ad-hoc, localized argument for the value of languages, but there are disciplinary reasons for the specific faculty members being employed which of course draw on both local traditions and global value arguments (May, 2015). The languages are seen as potentially relevant for students during their studies at UCPH or abroad, both as language and cultural resources. Thus, it is argued that linguistic and cultural diversity is an asset because of curricular traditions, access to knowledge and cultures outside the Anglophone context, globalization of the academic labor market etc. In order to argue for the diversity, the other languages are here compared to the “English of Anglo-Saxon culture”, i.e., a localized version of English, and not to English seen as a global language or as “the lingua franca of research” referred to elsewhere in the document.

The inclusion of other languages than Danish and English in *Destination 2012* was followed up by a Board decision in 2012 to set up and fund a 5 year-project focusing on this part of the strategy. This was given the title of *Flere sprog til flere studerende (More Languages for More Students)*. The decision to promote a multi-lingual language strategy sets UCPH apart from the majority of European universities. Many of them teach foreign languages in language programs, and an increasing number have introduced English as medium-of-instruction as an alternative to the national language(s) to attract more international students (Extra and Yagmur 2012: 59–60). However, only rarely do they set aside resources to teach other languages than English and the national language(s) to non-language students.<sup>1</sup> With the launching of the strategy of *More Languages for More Students*, UCPH seems to follow up on the recommendations to promote students’ plurilingual competencies, put forward by the European Union and The Council of Europe (see an overview in Extra and Yagmur, 2012, pp. 13–18). Together with the parallel language strategy, this approach also seems to mark a break with the ideology of monolingualism

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<sup>1</sup> Within the Nordic region, Finnish universities include a mandatory foreign language element in all BA-programs, and Roskilde University in Denmark has experimented with French, German and Spanish *Language Profiles* as an option in the humanities and social science and as an alternative to studies in English or Danish (Daryai-Hansen, Barfod, & Schwartz, 2016).

which despite the widespread use of textual material in other languages had been dominant since the establishment of the University as a national institution during the nineteenth century (but not during earlier periods, Mortensen & Haberland, 2012). According to one definition, a monolingual university assumes that the language used for instruction is also the students' first language and the language used during their secondary education and in the labor market they target (Van Leeuwen, 2004). Obviously, these assumptions no longer hold in practice, but does the introduction of a parallel language strategy and a plurilingual strategy transform UCPH into a university guided by a multilingual mindset? And what happens when a language policy "from above" is combined with identification of language needs "from below" (Spolsky, 2004). In order to pursue these questions I shall focus on the development of the conceptual framework of *More Languages for More Students* and on the implementation of this in practice across the University.

## 5 Launching the Language Strategy: An Initiative from Above

The process of developing the strategy was initiated by the Rector's office, which in 2012 approached the Faculty of Humanities where almost all the University's research and teaching positions connected to languages are found. After an open meeting with, among others, heads of departments, heads of study programs and student representatives, the Rector decided to set up a cross-faculty committee to establish a common ground for implementing the multilingual part of the language strategy. By appointing members at associate dean or study board level from all six faculties and from the two most relevant departments at Humanities in addition to student representatives, the Rector signaled that the committee was a high-level combination of political interests and language expertise. The committee sent in a report recommending the launch of a specific language strategy under the title of *More Languages for More Students*, which was afterwards given a 5-year funding period<sup>2</sup>. The overall aim was to improve language skills among students across the University and, in principle, to include all relevant language resources available. This meant a focus on the abovementioned 40+ languages "already taught and researched", including English and Danish as a second language. It also meant developing new language teaching activities since it was a precondition that the strategy aimed at students outside foreign language programs or language students outside their main field of study.

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<sup>2</sup>The strategy was set up as a 5-year project under the UCPH Prorector for Education, Lykke Friis, running from 2013–2018, and anchored at Faculty of Humanities under the Associate Dean for Education, Jens Erik Mogensen. In practice, an administrative unit (the project team) was established at the University's Centre for Internationalization and Parallel Language Use. This meant that the project activities could draw on the Centre's research base as well as its expertise in developing tailor-made courses in English and Danish for staff and students.

The decision to include more languages than English and Danish in the University's strategic document from 2008, *Destination 2012*, and to refer to this in its successor, *Strategy 2016*, was made at the top level of the University's management and confirmed by the Board. The initiative to follow up on this by setting up a committee to investigate faculty interests in the language policy was also taken at this level and so was the decision to fund a 5-year project. Thus the launching of the strategy was a top-down initiative. However, the strategy would probably never have developed into an action plan if it had not also corresponded to local needs and interests and met with individual agency at many levels of the University. As we shall see later, this was also where some of the barriers were identified.

## **6 Institutional Perspective on Students' Language Needs: The Middle-level**

A focal point of the new strategy was to develop activities which respond to student needs in different situations, both as these are experienced by the students themselves, but also as seen by the local boards responsible for the study programs and by representatives of the University's institutional interests (at the level of each faculty or the Rector's office). From the onset, the development of the strategy was based on dialogue with the potential users of the activities set up, and it included identifying activities concerning students' foreign language competence which had already been developed within specific programs, assuming that these may also be seen as a response to language needs among students. Thus the language needs in focus were both present and future needs, experienced or foreseen as relevant by the students as well as their lecturers, but also seen through the lens of curricular traditions and priorities made in formal documents. Furthermore, the questions asked dealt with the selection of languages (English, Danish, French, Arabic, etc.) as well as the identification of the relevant subcomponents of each language in question. Thus an important starting point for the strategy was Mike Long's warning against seeing language needs as a "one-size-fits-all approach" (2005, p. 1). This applies both to the conceptual framework of what constitutes language needs, in which it is crucial to consider "the specificity of the tasks, genres and discourse practices that language learners encounter in the varied domains in which they must operate" (Long, 2005, p. 1), but also to the methodology used to uncover the relevant aspects of language needs.

The outcome of the meetings with study boards or directors of study programs across the University was both the identification of language needs as seen relevant from a study board perspective and the identification of local actors who were willing to cooperate with the project team to work out ideas for new teaching activities. These activities were then developed as pilot projects, which were supported by funding from the strategy if criteria of academic quality and relevance were met. All pilot projects have been evaluated and, if needed, adjusted in content or form.

Successful projects have been run at least twice, and if possible they have then been embedded in the regular study programs. To a very large extent the procedures have been based on user needs and priorities. At the time of writing, more than 31 pilot projects have been developed and carried out, targeting more than 4000 students, and involving all six faculties at UCPH. 14 of these projects concern English whereas 16 projects involve other languages (Ancient Greek, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Latin, Spanish, and Danish as a second language) and one project cuts across languages at Humanities. All the English projects deal with written language, predominantly linked to the students' writing of assignments or exam papers and to some extent on their reading of academic texts in English. The Danish projects focus on meeting the requirements in students' written exams. The German and French projects also focus on written language, but only in reading, and with a specific focus on giving the students access to primary sources in French or German. The two Spanish and Arabic projects are both motivated by the students' need for spoken language to carry out field work, and the Chinese project differs from the other pilot projects by having a fairly small language component embedded in a broader cultural approach on health issues.

Through the meetings, the project team has also gained experience with the perceptions of language found in higher education outside language programs. Some directors have been hesitant about spending time on the language strategy while indicating that languages are a low priority compared to other pressing matters, whereas others have been more willing and a few have even contacted the project team before the meeting was set up. However, as the strategy is considered a binding part of the UCPH general strategy, meetings with most study boards or directors have been carried out within the first 30 months of the project period. During the meetings, the members of the board and/or directors have been introduced to the strategy, followed by an exchange about the relevance of languages in general within the study program and about subcomponents of language competence in particular. One recurrent topic is the underlining of the strategy's concept of language competence as a set of skills related to language use in a specific academic domain rather than as the commonsensical view of language as a nominal category which speakers either have or do not have (Ricento, 2014). The skills mentioned are both the four classic language proficiency skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, but also the competence to interact with other students and lecturers, to participate in classroom, laboratories or field work and to access and produce knowledge through language. This may seem evident from a languages-in-education perspective. But at the same time, the conceptual framework brought into the meeting by the project team must be related to specific priorities in the domain in question. Thus in order to develop new and relevant language activities both perspectives are important since "there is as little reason to expect solid metalinguistic information from domain experts as there is to expect valid domain-specific knowledge from applied linguists" (Long, 2005, p. 35).

Collectively, the pilot projects display the diversity of language use across faculties and disciplines with their different traditions for interactions in the classrooms, for selecting reading material and assigning written tasks. They have all been devel-

oped and carried out in practice through an unusual procedure of combining a top-down initiative (in terms of setting up and funding the vision in *Destination 2012*) with local agency and institutional influence. This means that the meetings between study boards and project team to inform about the strategy and identify potential language needs are considered mandatory, but that the needs are only transformed into pilot projects when there is a local interest in this. Furthermore, the choice of language and of language skills in each project as well as the decision to link this to one or the other study unit is a local decision.

## 7 Students' Perspective on Their Language Needs: From Below

The meetings with representatives from the particular fields of study are supplemented with a number of wide-scale surveys with students. At the time of writing, students from three out of UCPH's six faculties (Theology, Social Sciences and Law) have been invited to take part in surveys on their present experience with and future needs for languages, and so have students from across UCPH during their study-abroad period. Approximately 15% of students in the four categories responded, which means a response from around 2500 students altogether. In general, the students confirm both the choice of languages and the choice of language skills presented above. About 30% of the students across the surveys feel that they need a better command of written academic English in order to meet the requirements in their current field of study. This applies to students at BA- as well as MA-level (PhD students are not included in the surveys).<sup>3</sup> One student of Social Science expresses his concerns about the role of English in his study activities:

I have HUGE problems with the many academic texts in English at Social Science. There is a lot I don't understand and I simply don't get... There is NO connection between admission requirements and what is expected. The texts should therefore be in Danish. Otherwise, perhaps students should be required to spend some time abroad or complete a qualifying language test before embarking on their studies.

The students are also aware of the gap between the English competence they have acquired in secondary school and the academic competence required of them during their studies. Compared to non-Anglophone, European standards, Danish students are considered high level speakers of English as a second language (Rubio & Lirola, 2010; European Commission, 2012). But the focus of secondary school does not provide a sufficient bridge to the Academic English required in higher education. Two students of Anthropology have different concerns about this:

I think that we need instruction in written English. During this term I have been asked to submit an assignment in English, but I have never been taught Academic English.

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<sup>3</sup>In Denmark PhD students are considered employees on 3-year contracts and not students.



When we have English-speaking teachers, I do not have sufficient English skills, both in terms of academic terminology and in general, to be active in class. I have been able to stick to Danish all through my BA, and although this has been convenient, I do not feel capable of coping in English in professional contexts, during exchange, at the labor market or at English-medium courses at UCPH.

In addition, about 10% of students mention that they have experienced problems during their studies because of their limited language competence in French, German, or Spanish, and at Theology also in Latin and Greek and in Africa Studies in Swahili and French. A student of Theology focuses on the study value of being able to access text material in its original language:

I think you should expect of the students' German language skills to be at a much higher level from the beginning, so that texts by Nietzsche and Luther are not handed out in English. As a Danish Lutheran theologian, it is my opinion that it's a great loss not to have access to the German academic tradition.

This student refers to the curricular tradition in some of the study programs based on students' having acquired a sufficient level of reading competence in German and French during their secondary school. With the changes in the Danish school system in the 2005 Reform, this competence can no longer be taken for granted, but the reading activities are still relevant at university level, and now it is left to the students themselves to catch up language-wise or make do without the primary sources. Similar experience is reported by students of Philosophy and in this example Comparative Literature:

It would make it possible for me to include more academic texts in the long run, and I would get a much deeper understanding of fictional works if I could read them in their original language.

Some students also focus on the role of language in the labor market which they target. As one student of Political Science emphasizes, this could be a matter of linking the two kinds of competence together:

In general, I feel that my access to a global labor market would be considerably better if I had had the opportunity of combining my professional knowledge with language.

When Law students are asked which languages would improve their job opportunities they list several languages. More than 90% mention English, whereas French and German are referred to by more than 50% of the 603 students taking part in this survey. Danish, Chinese, Spanish, Swedish, Arabic, Norwegian and Portuguese are all mentioned by at least 10 students. The Law survey also includes responses from 71 lecturers of Law, who confirm the value of the listed languages for their students' job opportunities.

Even students at Faculty of Science, which has traditionally been more open towards introducing English as medium-of-instruction than Law, report the need to include more languages than English and Danish to improve their chances at the global labor market. As expressed by a student of Mathematics who went on an

**Table 1** Number of Social Science students taking foreign language courses

	French	German	Spanish	English	Arabic
In private schools in Denmark	36	18	11	13	10
In on-line courses	7	5	4	4	2
During exchange periods abroad	16	28	16	7	3

**Table 2** Number of UCPH students on study abroad in selected countries in 2013–14

Country	Number of UCPH students
USA	81
Australia	47
England	38
Canada	35
Germany	30
France	17
Scotland	14

exchange to Australia being aware that Germany would have been a better choice for his study interests:

No doubt it would have opened more doors if I had been able to communicate in German and not only in English. Taking part in research projects and looking for work has not really been a possibility [while in Australia].

Not only do a substantial number of the students see a value in foreign language competence. They are also willing to put an effort into acquiring this. Out of the 953 Social Science students who responded to the survey, 180 had taken part in foreign language classes, about 50% in private classes (i.e., against a fee paid by the students themselves) Table 1.

Likewise, students are aware that their lacking competence in a relevant foreign language may be a barrier for their opportunities to go on exchange. One student of Economics says about his fellow students that.

I know there are [students] who choose not to go on exchange because they feel that their English is not good enough to be able to pass an exam in English.

The dominance of English is also confirmed by the students' choice of country for exchange studies. In 2013–14, the top 7 countries for students at UCPH to visit included 5 English-speaking countries (USA, Australia, England, Canada and Scotland) in addition to Germany and France Table 2.

A student of Ethnology who opted for a US university is aware of the background for this choice:

Due to lack of knowledge of other languages, I opted out of applying for [a study abroad program] in countries in which English wasn't the language of instruction.

Another student (of Law) who went to Scotland, did not seem to know that UCPH offers pre-semester Spanish courses for outgoing students, although the student had an interest in Latin America:

Had it been possible to take a Spanish course, I might have applied for a stay in Latin America.

Across the surveys, one gets the impression that students at UCPH acknowledge the role of English described in the parallel language policy, but that a substantial part of them have experienced problems when meeting the requirements for academic English, in particular in their own writing, but also when reading academic texts. Problems with their mastery of academic Danish are also mentioned along the same lines (see Holmen, 2015 for a discussion of this). Furthermore, some of them show an interest in other foreign languages for different purposes: to access textual material in languages central to their field of study, to prepare for a field work or study abroad or to target a wider labor market as candidates. Which languages to focus on differ between study areas, but priorities made by study boards also show that students' language needs are treated differently at different layers of the UCPH organization. This is made clear when we compare the position of English with that of the two other most reported languages, French and German.

## 8 Gatekeepers and Drivers of Change

Before comparing across languages, it is useful to sum up the process of developing and implementing the language strategy of *More Languages for More Students* as seen through a lens of organizational change. First of all, we have been able to identify drivers of change who actively promote the intentions behind the paragraph in *Destination 2012* saying that "Students must be given easily available opportunities to acquire competence in another foreign language and another culture than the Anglo-Saxon". Besides the Rector's office and the Board, who took the original initiative, these are individual program directors who approach the project team, apply for funding for pilot projects and evaluate and further develop the projects. In some cases, they have even taken the first steps to adjust their local study program to encompass the language component on a permanent basis. Their colleagues in other study programs are either less interested or explicitly hostile towards embracing language issues, especially when these fall outside the use of English. As gatekeepers of the study programs, they are reluctant to include language elements because they see this happening at the expense of core elements. One head of a study board even said openly that he had chosen to meet the project group on his own and not invite the board since a meeting with other lecturers and student representatives might mean that they would identify language needs which he would not be willing to prioritize afterwards. Hereby he implies that he is aware of potential language needs, but for various reasons not interested in responding to them. Another director of a study program refused meeting the project group or providing the access to the study board insisting that "he was far too busy running the program". At a couple of meetings with study boards, language needs concerning academic English have been raised by the student representatives, apparently much to

the surprise of the lecturers present. The ideas are then supported by the board and transformed into pilot projects, but they would never have been identified as relevant without the students present. One response to the reluctance to include language components have been to include projects focusing on a specific skill (e.g., reading) and linking this closely to the core content (e.g., through the textual material already in the curriculum). This may be seen as a new version of content-and-language-integrated-learning (CLIL, Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010) in so far as the projects have a dual focus on language and content learning, but is limited in its language scope.

Through the first 30 months of the strategy, we have seen that barriers of change are mainly located at the meso-level of the organization; i.e., in the local study boards and directors of study programs. Appointed as spokesmen of the specific field of study and the research area this is based on, they are both individual agents (identified by name and position), but also represent the professional field and the local institution (e.g., a department). However, at this level of the organization we have not only met the gatekeepers, but also the drivers of change who use their individual agency and representative power to include the language strategy in their subject area. Whether the projects will eventually succeed or not, depends to a very large extent on what happens at the micro-level; i.e., in the specific classrooms and with the learning processes of the students involved (cf Martin-Jones, 2015). In the short run, the criterion for success is the development of pilot projects which are well-evaluated for their high quality and relevance. In the long run, the main criterion for success is that the pilot projects will later be embedded in the ordinary study programme through the local forces claiming ownership or - if that is not possible - that permanent funding is set aside for language teaching independently of the study programs.

When comparing the position of English vis-à-vis German or French the role of the gatekeepers become particularly salient. Basically, the macro-level of UCPH (Rector's office and the University Board) seem guided by the same perspective on the role of languages for higher education and employability as the Danish government (2013) and the European Union and Council of Europe (see the overview in Extra and Yagmur, 2012). Although they point to the significant role of English as a language of wider communication, they are also advocates for a plurilingual strategy with some flexibility in choice of language for different business or professional areas. Thus the initiative to launch the language strategy could be seen as an instance of the impact of "global flows in local language planning" (Hult & Källkvist, 2015). This is supported by empirical studies in Danish companies (Verstraete-Hansen, 2008) and government offices (Andersen & Verstraete-Hansen, 2013). In both domains, the need for competence in mainly German, French and Spanish alongside English is underlined.

At UCPH, we have seen that a majority of the students who responded to our surveys expressed a need to include a language component in their field of study, and a number of them had already put in an effort into attending language courses on line or in private language schools. Although this does not necessarily mean that they would prefer an obligatory language component or that they would prioritize

language over other dimensions of their study program, they still appear to be more interested in languages than the study boards and program directors from the same areas. E.g., these two students of Law and Political Science:

[Focusing on] an international organization with English and French as working languages, it is a shame and a nuisance that there is no high quality and easily available possibility of following the [language] instruction parallel to one's regular study. It results in a lack of competence when one must make do with Danish and English to communicate in a widening international market.

My limited French was a problem while I was on an exchange. Both academically and socially. It is a problem that the university seems to think that language competencies include English only. No one is impressed by the fact that a graduate student speaks English – we're expected to. Foreign languages today go beyond Danish and English.

Whereas study boards are fairly willing to contribute to pilot projects within the field of academic English, they are much more reluctant to respond to the need for e.g., French or German expressed by students and labor market representatives. The few pilot projects carried out with French and German are all within study programs which have had a long tradition for reading texts in one or both languages, and the pilot projects thus seem to have a remedial function in relationship to students' study skills. But within studies which are oriented towards a career in international organizations or government offices the only voices who speak in favor of French or German language competence are the students. Some of them have even invested time and money in private classes.

## 9 Conclusion: Challenges for the Language Strategy

The launching and funding of the language strategy of *More Languages for More Students* is a clear signal from the top management at UCPH that a certain amount of plurilingualism is a target for the University in its internationalization efforts. However, the University has very little systematic knowledge about the language needs of students during their study period, including exchange periods abroad, or about the role of languages for their future careers. Therefore a core task for the project team has been to develop procedures for identifying language needs in relation to content and profile of the specific study programs, but also in relation to the learning needs and future prospects of students. Both kinds of needs analyses have revealed solid patterns of language needs and based on these a number of pilot projects have been developed. During this process, it has become clear that it is important to distinguish between individual skills and to relinquish traditional perspectives on language based on the all-or-nothing attitude linked to the educated native speaker (Kuteeva, 2014; Ricento, 2014). It is also important to develop new forms of integrating language with content and develop awareness about the role of languages for students' study skills and career possibilities. This applies to English as well as other foreign languages. However, the most surprising finding in the process of needs analysis is to identify that the barriers to change within this specific area

are the professional representatives at a meso-level of the organization. To convince these gatekeepers about the added value in giving students “easily available opportunities to acquire competence in another foreign language and another culture than the Anglo-Saxon” is a major challenge.

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# Globalization, Foreign Language Acquisition Planning and Classroom Practice: A Case Study of Multinational Group Interaction in a Japanese University English Course



Hirokazu Nukuto

**Abstract** This case study examines the implementation of one Japanese university's foreign-language education policy related to globalization and its practice in a multicultural English classroom. As globalization continues, universities in Japan are considering how to educate students to function in international environments. English has been the major foreign language in Japan for a long time and it is viewed as a bridging tool to the global village. The data used for the present study were gathered as a part of the author's ethnographic fieldwork in a one-semester TOEFL preparation course at a Japanese university in 2014. The results of the analysis suggest two major points: (1) The process of foreign language education planning corresponding to social change, such as globalization, attempts to reproduce the macro contextual situation in the micro setting of the group. Learners acquire a target language through "an ideal situation" in order to become global language speakers. (2) Learners need to acquire not only a new language, but also intercultural communicative competence to ensure their achievement in the class. Finally, the study suggests that there is a particular style of (foreign) language acquisition planning that is applicable to the global era.

**Keywords** Ethnography · Foreign language education policy · Globalisation · Intercultural communication competences · Japan

## 1 Introduction

In recent years, the English education policy of Japan has become increasingly and self-consciously associated with the process of globalization. There are, however, various interpretations and definitions of "globalization" depending on the contexts where it appears— such as the economic, cultural or political (Maringe and Foskett

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2010). Nevertheless, there is a general feeling that globalization is something to which the aims and the style of teaching and learning need to respond (Butler & Iino, 2005). Various reforms have been implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), a department of the Japanese government, explicitly in response to increasing globalization (MEXT 2011).

However, the policy reforms not only have an influence on national schools, but also, to some extent, on private schools whose authorities are independent from the government policy. While the government attempted to reform and make Japanese universities “global and internationally competitive” (Ishikawa, 2011, p. 193) with the selection of 13 universities for a so-called “Global 30” program (MEXT, 2009), other universities also have had to deal with the issue of education policy related to globalization.<sup>1</sup>

In order to examine the response to globalization in practice, and its relation to foreign language education, the present study focuses on one example of global (language) education planning in a Japanese private university. As we shall see, there appears to be a consensus among educators and students that “globalization”, in the context of language learning, is a matter less of language acquisition in itself than of practice in using English to actually interact with others, particularly in contexts where it is the lingua franca. For students, then, becoming “globalized” is often equated with using English in this way.

The study is a part of the author’s larger ethnographic research which focuses on academic discourse and foreign language socialization, and its relation to the more general curriculum, within the university’s global and international education. Based on “rich points” (Agar, 1996) from that research, the present study examines the following issues: (1) How are the goals of foreign language education planning influenced by “globalization”, and how are these reproduced in the micro context of the classroom? (2) How do participants develop competencies in English and intercultural communication in the micro-context of the classroom?

In order to examine the issues above, I employed three types of data for this study: documents, group interaction data, and participants’ interview data.

## 2 Background

Features of language policy and planning have had to be reformed, as social situations have changed, to respond to social and political conditions (Ricento, 2000). Private universities in Japan are generally free to conduct their own education planning even if they are influenced by sociocultural context and the government’s education policy. Japanese language policy has reconsidered language education in the era of globalization, for example, by suggesting a “Plan for 300,000 Exchange Students”

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<sup>1</sup>Global 30 Program (MEXT, 2009) was renewed and launched as Top Global University Project (MEXT, 2014, [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/houdou/26/09/\\_icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/10/07/1352218\\_02.pdf](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/26/09/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/10/07/1352218_02.pdf))

in 2008 (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2016). This plan was not only concerned with the acquisition of English as a global language, but also aimed at creating international pedagogical contexts within Japan, and thereby promoting Japanese universities as international universities with international students.

Many Japanese universities have managed to become multilingual and multicultural. In the 2000s, Japanese universities offered English programs through English only or programs that use both Japanese and English to create opportunities for English learning related to globalization (Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011)<sup>2</sup>. In this type of program, English is expected to function not only as a target language but also as a medium of communication and a trigger for target language acquisition. From a practical perspective, this is important in that it has an influence on Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) according to MEXT's (2003) promotion of the idea of "Japanese who can use English" (Hashimoto, 2006, 2009).

English is expected to be a medium for learners to participate in global situations, and it is well accepted that English is used as a worldwide *lingua franca*, "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen *foreign* language of communication" (Firth, 1996, cited in Jenkins, 2014, p. 24). There have been cases where English as a medium for university management has been an issue for universities (e.g., Jenkins, 2014). In European universities, English functions as a *lingua franca* in administrative contexts where international students are involved, as well as in pedagogical contexts (*ibid.*). Putting aside the issues highlighted by Jenkins (*ibid.*) – that there are some linguistic inequalities and difficulties in conducting school courses with international students – a similar linguistic situation might be ideal for Japan, where international curricula are managed through the medium of English, and macro-level situations related to globalization are reproduced in micro-level school contexts.

In addition to English proficiency, communication proficiency did appear in MEXT's "Action Plan" (MEXT, 2003) as one of the important competencies for "global persons". The MEXT policy thus started to use "*Komyunikeshon noryoku*" (proficiency in communication) as a crucial target for the English learning context. According to Torikai (2005), with the appearance of this keyword, the occurrence of other words such as "culture" or "cultural understanding" has decreased. She states that "the government's rationale for their decisions on the purpose and objects of English language education is to accommodate globalization" (Torikai, 2005, p. 251). As expressed in her summary, global education has two goals: English language competence and communicative competence for the global context.

In MEXT's "Plan to Foster Global Human Resources (*Gurobaru Jinzai Ikusei Keikaku*)" (2012), "language" and "communication proficiency" are listed as two crucial goals that define global human resources. These two proficiencies are an expected part of international communication. MEXT (2011) suggests, as an ideal

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<sup>2</sup>Traditionally, English has been taught in Japan through the medium of the Japanese language, with the focus on grammar and translation and with little actual use of spoken English in the classroom."

level of foreign language proficiency that “Foreign language proficiency required in global society can be defined as capability of smooth communication with people of different countries and cultures using foreign languages as a tool” (p. 3). In this quotation, language proficiency is converted into “capability of smooth communication”. These two proficiencies can also be seen as key terms in the university’s education document cited in the present study.

### 3 Method

#### 3.1 *The Larger Ethnographic Study*

I collected the data for my ethnographic study of language socialization between April and July in 2014, at a private Japanese university in the Kansai region. I participated in the course as one of the teaching assistants (TA), as well as a researcher. Fieldwork was done in the class, “TOEFL Preparation Course”, the purpose of which was to help participants acquire strategies for the TOEFL test through classroom English learning. However, as we shall see later on, particularly in the analysis section, the purpose was not explicitly for practicing the test itself, but for learning and practicing academic discourse strategies in a western academic style which might be useful for TOEFL. This course was offered by the university’s Division of International Affairs, which is responsible for the education of international students, for sending home students abroad, and for international education more generally within the university.

In the classroom, I carried out participant observation, the aim of which was to explore language acquisition and practice in a natural setting, and analyze the findings from an insider’s point of view, that is, through an emic approach (e.g., Davis, 1999). For these methodological aims, I needed to lessen the influence of my existence in the classroom in order to keep the events natural (Genzuk, 2003); in other words, to avoid the “observer’s paradox” (Labov, 1972). As I had a role in the classroom as a TA, my participation was fairly natural.

By taking an ethnographic approach, this research covered not only the group oriented events of the class, but also focused on the macro-micro context continuum (e.g., Blommaert & Jie, 2010), including the aims of the course as written in official documentation and its relation to classroom practice. From the anthropological point of view, Johnson (2009, 2013), referring to Geertz (1973), uses the term, “thick description”, to describe the layer of findings that characterize language planning and its practice in classrooms.

### 3.2 *The Setting and Participants*

The course was taught by a Japanese female associate professor who was a bilingual speaker of English. Six TAs (three Americans, two Japanese, one Chinese) helped her with this class. Their role in this classroom was not to teach the class as a whole but to serve as group coordinators. I was one of the Japanese TAs. The class consisted of 22 students from Asian countries including Japan. They were grouped into six groups following the result of a placement test implemented in the second week. We had three levels of grouping: *jokyu* (highest level), *chukyu* (intermediate), and *shokyu* (lowest level). Each TA was slotted into a group according to their own and the students' English level.

According to the ethnographic perspective, as mentioned by Hornberger (2013, p. 115), the goal of study "is not generalization...but rather a search for particularity". With this in mind, the present study focuses on one group as a representative example of the relation between the globalized language learning curriculum and classroom practice. My target group for this study was the most advanced group. I chose this group because of the level and because the members of this group came from various backgrounds. It consisted of one Japanese student, one international exchange student from Indonesia, one international exchange student from Thailand, and an American exchange student who served as the TA. I found that most of the participants had reached a level where they could follow the native English TA.

### 3.3 *Types of Data*

In the present study, I employed three types of data:

*The Curriculum Document* The official university document describing the settings which are unfamiliar to outsiders, as well as the aim of the course, was used as a first type of data. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) mention that "Documentation can provide information about the settings being studied, or about their wider contexts, and particularly about key figures or organizations" (p. 122). As for the macro discourse, the broadest context of "the order of the discourse" (Fairclough, 1992), frames the ideal context envisioned by the planners. In this study, the role of the documentation is not only to show the setting, but also to indicate what would be expected in the classroom and to suggest how these ideas would be expressed in the sessions.

*Group Interaction* The data were collected by using a digital voice recorder with a small microphone. I asked the TA to pin the microphone on his chest during the sessions. This seems to have succeeded in recording the data as natural interaction in the group sessions judging from the fact that the students did not explicitly mention the existence of the microphone at all. Examining this data, we can explore the

degree to which the classroom practice matched the expectation suggested in the documents.

*Interviews* In the interview sessions, I attempted to get the insiders' points of view by reviewing events with the participants from the target group. I conducted interviews by Messenger<sup>3</sup> after the participants had left Japan. This included the one Japanese student, who had also left Japan and was an exchange student in the UK. As Duranti (1997) says, "... the interview might be a time to obtain background cultural information that is crucial for understanding particular speech exchanges they are studying" (pp. 102–103). Hence, in the interview sessions, I attempted not only to find out what participants had felt in the group sessions about the setting and the events, but also to learn more about the setting with the insiders' help. By analyzing the interview data, I hoped to understand how the participants felt about the situation in which they were involved.

### 3.4 *Interpretation of Interaction Data*

In order to interpret the group interaction data, I focus primarily on how knowledge is constructed through language learning and various sociocultural practices. From the perspective of classroom discourse analysis, Cazden (2001) mentions that we put analytical focus on how "patterns of language use affect what counts as 'knowledge,' and what occurs as learning?" (p. 3). Applying this perspective, I examine participants' language use in relation to the outcomes of the group sessions.

In addition to the focus on the patterns of group language use, as suggested by Cazden (2001), I applied the framework of *sociocultural discourse analysis* (Mercer, 2004) to investigate how thought is constructed through interaction. Throughout group sessions where one discussion topic is given, participants not only use language (in an EFL context, they try to use the target language), but also think and take part in other participants' thinking. Mercer (2000) calls this "interthink". Examining such interthinking, sociocultural discourse analysis focuses on how language functions in creating knowledge rather than on particular language features (Mercer, 2004).

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<sup>3</sup>Messenger is a free-toll texting tool. (see [https://www.messenger.com/?\\_rdr](https://www.messenger.com/?_rdr))

## 4 Data Analysis

### 4.1 Program Document

Here, I review and analyze three extracts from the program guide brochure: Curriculum Overall Introduction, Program Aim (Intercultural Competence) and TOEFL Score Up Training.<sup>4</sup>

Extract 1 expresses the overall goal of the curriculum in which the target course is included. This extract announces the launch of the new curriculum designed for the global education in the university.

#### Extract 1 Curriculum Overall Introduction

Starting in 2014–2015, the A University<sup>5</sup> has launched a new curriculum for international students and Japanese students who wish to develop their intercultural competence.

In this extract, the curriculum planner outlined who could participate and what competence they would acquire through this curriculum. The term “intercultural competence” is not specific (in contrast to, for example, “improve their English”); it is unclear whether the definition includes language learning or not. However, it informs students that they can all take the courses in this curriculum, and that it particularly suits students who are interested in intercultural communication. Considering the overall aim here, it seems that the planner has attempted to encourage students to be global and intercultural throughout this curriculum. The lack of reference to language itself is indicative of the emphasis on the importance of the idea of the “intercultural”.

In addition to the key phrase, “intercultural competence”, the extract describes participants as “international students and Japanese students”. This phrase describes the courses as taking place in an intercultural setting, and this corresponds to the curriculum’s pedagogical aim of training students to be global and international human resources.

Extract 2 explains the program aim, in particular focusing on “intercultural competence”. Following Extract 1, the program guide goes into more detail about the competence needed for the courses. In Extract 2, the key phrase, “a foreign language (e.g., English)” appears. This extract presents the details of the “intercultural competence” mentioned in the sub-title of the documents. The curriculum describes the needs for students to be intercultural persons and to be communicatively active during intercultural interaction. In addition to these competencies, in order for students to take part in intercultural communication, the text points to the role of foreign language, of which English is used as the example. Here, the language is regarded as “vital” to communicative competence, and is defined as an “important focus” in this curriculum.

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<sup>4</sup>This is the original title of the course though is Japanese English expression.

<sup>5</sup>The name of the university has been replaced with a pseudonym.



### **Extract 2 Program Aim (Intercultural Competence)**

The A University curriculum aims to nurture a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills necessary for students to understand and respect people from different cultural backgrounds, and how to respond appropriately and effectively when interacting and communicating with them. Good communication skills in a foreign language (e.g., English) is vital for such competency, and this is an important focus of the curriculum on offer.

Extract 3 describes the micro context most focused on in the present study. As mentioned earlier, this course was officially offered to students for improving their TOEFL scores, and their study strategies for TOEFL.

### **Extract 3 TOEFL Score Up Training**

This course is designed to help students improve their score on the TOEFL examination using academic language skills and test-taking strategies. The class will practice for specific sections of the test. By the end of the course, students will be able to approach the Listening, Structure/ Written Expression, and Reading/Vocabulary sections of paper-based TOEFL (iBT) with appropriate strategies. Some e-learning tools will be used to enhance the students' self-learning activities outside class hours.

According to Extract 3, this class would focus on TOEFL preparation, considering “academic language skills” and “test-taking strategies”. The aim is to cover all sections of the TOEFL test, which is also relevant to English language learning on a broader scale.

This class was set up for the students who desired to study abroad and needed to take the TOEFL exam. However, as later examples will show, most of the activities were for learning English and academic discourse strategies rather than for practicing the TOEFL test per se, although students should be able to acquire relevant TOEFL strategies through the activities.

## **4.2 *Group Interaction in the Course***

Interpreting the documents, the core learning aims are thus: intercultural competence, academic language skills (English proficiency), and TOEFL test taking strategies. These aims are considered in all types of group activities. Examples of the kinds of activities involved are given in Extracts 4 and 5, which follow.

Extract 4 records the group activity, “Making an English story from four pictures”. The group members have a sheet on which the pictures A, B, C, and D are drawn in black and white. On each picture, there are two horses facing different directions. They are tied together by a rope, and at each side, there is food. After discussing picture C and making up the story for it, the members start to talk about picture D (in line 1, the TA mentions “the next object is D”).

As the TA (an American) encourages the students to start to make up a story for picture D (1), Student R takes a turn to talk and starts explaining about the picture

(2). Following this, Student C makes a comment. Then Student R adds his idea, with some concerns (4, “Mm...”). After this, the TA tries to confirm and summarize the students’ idea using the discourse marker “so” (5). Responding to the TA’s confirmation, Student C adds another element to the idea, “they realize that there is a problem” (6). Following and agreeing to this repaired idea, Student O, who had previously been silent, takes part in this interaction by contributing the idea that in picture D, the main characters are trying to solve the problem (8). Student O’s line seems to be appropriating the phrase in which Student C has mentioned “the problem”. After this, including the idea of Student O, the TA finalizes the idea by writing it on a mini-board. Together with the TA, Student C and Student R complete the group idea (10–11).

#### **Extract 4 Making an English Story from Four Pictures**

1. TA: Good, OK. D:::
2. R: But ah::: they reserve this...no
3. C: XXX
4. R: Mm, no one get food.
5. TA: Mmm. So they realize that no one gained the food?
6. C: No! no one get to the food::↑they realize that there is a problem.
7. TA: Ah::: OK!
8. O: They try to solve the problem.
9. TA: Ah::: OK, so recognize the problem now? Ah::: they...((Writing this phrase on the board))
10. C: Because no one can get XXX
11. R: food.
12. TA: because no::: one::: can::: get::: the food ((Writing this phrase on the board))

Extract 5 is from data recorded during a different week’s class. The extract is an example of a group activity where only students look at a picture, then explain its features to the TA, so that he TA draws it with the hints from the students.

At the beginning, the TA asks about the picture which the students are looking at. Following this, Student C starts to describe the picture pointing out the clothing on the character (17). Just after the TA tries to confirm Student C’s idea (18), Student O adds his idea to Student C’s clearly using the phrase “I think” (19). Student C follows this up with an idea of her own, then Student O notices that the feature of the shirt is “line” (21). Next, the TA tries to confirm the shape of lines and whether they are stripes (22). After this, Student O and Student C cooperate with each other to determine whether the feature of the lines on the shirt is actually a triangle (23–24). After the TA’s feedback “Mm” (25), though Student C insists the line is a triangle, Student O shifts the idea from triangle to something looking like “W” (27). Student C then agrees with this idea. Following this, the focus changes to the placement of the “W” on the shirt after Student O notes that there are many “W”s (29–30). Following this change, Student C tries to answer, but can not find an appropriate expression (31). After this, Student O then suggests where the “W” is, with a new hint, “...his long T-shirt” (32). With this hint, the TA comes to understand the idea

that the character wears a long-sleeved T-shirt with “W” lines (33–35). At the end of the talk, Student O confirms this (34).

### **Extract 5 Explaining a Picture**

16. TA: OK:: What is he wearing? What does he look like?

17. C: Long:: xxx

18. TA: Ah, a long shirt? A long sleeved shirt?

19. O: I think it is xxx

20. C: xxxxxxxxx

21. O: Ah:: line...

22. TA: Stripe?

23. O: Not stripe, xxx like...

24. C: Triangle.

25. TA: Mm↑

26. C: Triangle.

27. O: Looks like, looks like many “W”.

28. C: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

29. O: Many “W”. “W”, “W”.

30. TA: Where? Where does it look like that?

31. C: Oh:: it’s like

32. O: His long... his long T-shirt

33. TA: It’s a long sleeved T-shir::t?

34. O: Long, long sleeved T-shirt, yeah.

35. TA: OK, OK.

These, then, were the types of group activities that characterized the course.

## **4.3 Interviews**

Participants from the interactions were then interviewed as informants in order to examine how the idea of globalization influences language acquisition planning and its practice in the classroom discourse. In particular, I wished to investigate the extent of participants’ awareness of the context and practice. I focused on (1) What participants felt as “globalization” in the course and in their group, and (2) whether participants were aware of any English acquisition having taken place. Extracts from interviews, as follows, are in the interviewees’ original English except where translated from Japanese.

### 4.3.1 Impression of Globalization in the Group and the Classroom

At the beginning of the interview, I asked the interviewees whether they had been able to feel “globalization” in their group. Interviewees had various impressions of this group, but broadly speaking three elements were attributed to globalization: the group composition and language use within the group, the sociocultural context, and the way of interaction.

The TA mentioned that the composition of the group made him feel the globalization. In particular there was the fact that each student had come from a different country. He also noted the use of English to communicate among participants in the group.

I think the group itself was a good example of globalization, mostly due to the fact that every member was of a different nationality and they were using English (in the classroom) as a means to interact and integrate with each other.

Moreover, referring to the underlying reason why he and the other group members had gotten together in the class, the TA noted, from the perspective of an exchange student in Japan, that learning about Japan, including Japanese language, was their original purpose for coming to the country.

Also you would notice globalization in the fact that three of the group members (myself included) were foreigners not from Japan, Japanese and Japan in general was another factor that brought us together and in a sense was part of globalization.

The TA also mentioned that that the process of interaction in the group made him feel globalization, in that all students interacted to achieve one goal.

There was definitely times within the group that we felt really involved because everyone was moving towards one goal. I think because of this we felt some form of globalization through working towards a common goal.

Similar to the TA, the Indonesian student referred to the participants’ nationalities and the multicultural situation of the class as a representation of globalization. He noted that he felt globalization in the situation where students whose languages and cultural backgrounds were different got together. He also cited the differences of students’ cultural background as being shown by the style of interaction in the group.

Another condition is...when we learning one topic and then the author (the TA)<sup>6</sup> always asked us “what about in ur country?” or “is it happening in ur country

According to the Indonesian student, the students in his group were often encouraged to refer to the case of their own country when they gave some comment or showed ideas to the group. Through this style of activity, he experienced globalization in exchanging and receiving knowledge of the various students’ countries. In addition, the Indonesian student mentioned different language features which he felt through the group interaction.

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<sup>6</sup>The Indonesian student uses “author” to describe “teacher” or “TA”

I felt it (globalization) when we were in conversation. Even in the same language (English) but we speak in different accent and pronounce.

The Indonesian student was referring to the function of English as a lingua franca in the group by emphasizing that each student had a different pronunciation (see, e.g., Jenkins, 2003).

The Japanese student also mentioned that the participants around him were a factor in his feeling of globalization in the group. In addition, he noted that he felt globalization due to the topics that they discussed.

At that time, there many foreign students around me, so I was feeling the difference. Sometimes, we talked about each culture and customs, and we were surprised by each other.

(Translated from Japanese by the author)

This type of situation made him feel like not being in his university, but as if he had gone into another sociocultural context.

The place was my school. But I felt more like I was a visitor.

(Translated from Japanese by the author)

### 4.3.2 Impression of English Acquisition

As per the aim of the course, I asked interviewees about the development of students' English proficiency. First, the TA indicated that he could not see any outstanding development of English proficiency among the students. He pointed out that this was a matter of the length of the course, and the number of classes in a semester.

I think it was too short a time to see much improvement in students' overall English. I do believe they may have picked up vocabulary and some of the English colloquialisms but no drastic improvements.

The TA did note, however that the students practiced using vocabulary while communicating with each other through spoken English.

The Indonesian student was unsure about whether he had improved his English through this course. However, he had a positive impression of the style of learning which he was able to acquire in the English course. He also compared this learning style with his learning experience in his home country.

I'm not pretty sure that my english got better but, the important thig is...when I joined into that class, I could learn english in different way...and it was so fun. it doesn't like what I've ever imagined

About his learning experience, he described the difference from the present English class.

well you know, normally the class there just 1 teacher, and many students. the author teach us and we just listening and writing and you'll get bored, dont you? but it totally different when I joined with that english class. the class's atmosphere was really alive. we were so active in the class. we talk, we share, we give opinion etc.

From his description, the classes in his country seemed to be non-communicative and non-interactive. He said that style made him bored, but, in contrast, he felt that the TOEFL class was really alive.

As suggested above, participants in general did not feel any improvement in their English during the course. However, two students made reference to the way of communication in group interaction. In a dialogue with me, the researcher, the Japanese student described the style of communication used in the group when the members created group ideas.

#### Interview dialogue

Author: OK. How was your English acquisition? Did you learn anything?

Student: I think so! I learned how we should tell our ideas and so on.

Author: I see. How do you do that?

Student: Mainly, first, make sure of what we should say. First of all, we state our idea, and support it. I learned such an English style.

Author: Do you think you can use it outside the classroom?

Student: Anywhere we can! We should state our conclusion to show our own idea. That is the style in the UK.

(Translated from Japanese by the author)

In this interview dialogue, the Japanese student understood English acquisition as a particular aspect of communicative competence. He said he could acquire the way of telling his ideas to the group, along with the process of interaction as structured in the group. As for this skill, he said he could use this communication style not only in this class, but also in the UK, where he had been studying as an exchange student at the time when this interview was conducted.

The Indonesian student also mentioned the group interaction and how he had become confident about interacting with the group members.

we've got a lot of information from another student about their opinions, which is different in each other. another one.....hmm I think it could make us more interactive and built our confidence to speak in a group or forum.

He remembered that the style of exchanging opinions in the group was a factor in increasing his confidence. He did not mention anything about English use at all in this comment, but rather focused on his mastering of the style.

## 5 Discussion

In my analysis, I looked at three types of data to examine how the university's language education policy related to global education as practiced in the classroom, and how participants (learners) interpreted the situation envisioned by the curriculum planner. In addition, I examined what students were encouraged to learn in relation to the policy provisions. In what follows, I discuss two points related to

global language education in the university, and also to the future development of global education policy: planned settings for language learning, and language learning through acquisition of communicative competence.

### 5.1 “Planned Settings” for Language Learning

In order for language acquisition to occur, education organizations need to create and offer settings where learners interact while learning languages. Cooper (1989) refers to this as “language acquisition planning,” defining it as “those (*means employed to attain acquisition goals*) designed primarily to create or to improve the opportunity to learn” (p. 159, italics added by the present author). Hornberger (2006) interprets this definition by noting that acquisition planning has an influence on language users by “improving opportunity” (p. 28).

In the analysis of the present study, it can be seen that the ideal setting was planned and shown in the documents. There, we could find that the curriculum aimed to produce an ideal setting, focusing on target participants with particular features; the course aspired to have international students as well as Japanese students who were interested in intercultural communication. Participants were encouraged to be “intercultural persons” and “communicatively active”. As seen in these expressions, the curriculum described not only a context for language learning but also one with a communicative learning orientation.

From the interviews, the participants remarked that in the class they felt globalization and that they experienced intercultural communication based on aspects of their identity such as a nationality and cultural background. The Indonesian student felt the difference in the cultural background when they had a chance to show their cultural knowledge in the group. In another example, the TA mentioned the mixture of the participants, and that they had a common reason for being in Japan. For the Japanese student, the course was held at his home university, but it made him feel as if he were in another sociocultural context. For example, he likened his participation to that of a visiting student.

The multicultural composition of the class also promoted English-use situations within group communication. The participation structure created situations similar to the context of globalization, with learners using English as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2003). The Indonesian student noticed each student’s English accent, and this made him feel involved in a global village. This case parallels the planning document (Extract 2), which noted that foreign language (English) was “vital” to accomplish the multicultural communication and was an important focus in the curriculum.

In conclusion, the curriculum plan was executed through a multicultural- and global-participation structure, which defined a setting that encouraged students to use a foreign language (English) as a common language. Although students were not given a pre-class or post-class English competency test, through their feedback



it seems to be the case that the intercultural group communication aided their language learning.

## 5.2 *Language Learning Through Acquisition of “Intercultural Communicative Competence”*

Another theme which comes out of the analysis is a need for communication proficiency in language learning. The term, “communicative competence” has been discussed in a broad area of sociolinguistic studies (e.g., Hymes, 1972a, 1972b) to more pedagogical studies such as Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). In Japan’s language education policy, it has also been raised as a crucial point. However, its definition is ambiguous as a goal of foreign language education (Torikai, 2005).

In the curriculum document used in my research, the competency needed for students in the course is defined as “intercultural competence”. In Japanese expression, this phrase is used which can be translated into “Intercultural Communicative Competence” or “Intercultural Communicative Proficiency”. The Japanese term is highly related to interaction in the global and multicultural situation of the course. Similarly, Byram (1997) suggests four crucial aspects of “intercultural communicative competence”: “knowledge, attitudes, skills of discovery and interaction” (p. 33). His idea is appropriate not only for the teaching and learning context but also for interaction between intercultural speakers. In the curricular document as well, the relationship between linguistic and communicative ability is implicit, and English is regarded as an important tool for the development of communicative competence within the context of the classroom.

In interviews, the TA mentioned that he did not notice any drastic development of English ability among students in the course even though the students were able to use a variety of vocabulary to communicate within the group. The Indonesian student also said that he was not sure whether his English developed. Nevertheless, the style of the class, which was active compared to his own country’s learning style, seemed to have created a positive attitude in him toward English learning.

In a globalized learning context, learners are required not only to use the language, but also to discover ways of communication suitable to the situation. More specifically, learners need to acquire not only linguistic skills, but also communicative competence through intercultural interaction and an understanding of multicultural elements. The communicative competence required in the context encourages students to use and acquire the target language, and learning English is a practical skill for global communication. Moreover, it reminds learners that language learning has practical global consequences.

To the question about the development of English ability, the Japanese student answered that he could communicate within the group. Reviewing the extracts from the group interaction, the learners were able to participate in “knowledge-

constructing interaction” rather than just practicing and using the target language. For example, in Extract 4, with the TA’s help, two students (C and R) mainly constructed the group idea, and Student O joined the interaction to promote the idea. Also, in Extract 5, two students (C and O) cooperated to construct a group idea as the goal. Student O described this communication style as “what we should say first. First of all, we state our idea, and support it” (Interview dialogue). This style was also mentioned by the Indonesian student as a factor that made him confident in his ability to participate in the group interaction.

In conclusion, even if it is difficult to show that target language learning was accomplished through the course, the students clearly acquired the competence appropriate to the context they faced. In this case, the communicative competence which they needed depended on a local context where they interacted and studied English. As Hornberger (1989) has suggested, in describing her own acquisition of communicative competence in a particular speech event in Spanish as a second language, participants are “communicatively competent” in that they “always get what they want, or who achieve what they set out to do in every situation” (p. 229). In the present case, the American TA seems to have served an important role in guiding students toward this, but the students made effort to acquire communicative competence in the discourse of the classroom through the medium of English as a *lingua franca*.

## 6 Conclusion

This study has examined a case of university language education planning and its practice in relation to the idea of globalization. In this Japanese context, foreign language acquisition planning has a feature of making English acquisition a secondary aim of the program. Owing to the variety of participants’ identities, a micro version of the sociocultural context is reproduced in the classroom, where target linguistic and intercultural communicative competence complement one another.

The curriculum documentation suggested a plan for a particular target group. The participants later recalled their experiences, which were in accordance with the planner’s wishes. They indicated that they could feel globalization, communicate with the group members and use English as a communicative tool. The study suggests that language education, and foreign language education planning, focus on both learning a target language and on the acquisition of communicative competence through target language use. In addition, it is necessary to plan for situations through which learners can gain experience in applicable contexts beyond the classroom.

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## Appendix: Transcription Conventions

TA = American exchange student

R = Indonesian exchange student

C = Thai exchange student

O = Japanese student

XXX = unintelligible

↑ = Rising Intonation

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# Washback Effects of the Science Without Borders, English Without Borders and Language Without Borders Programs in Brazilian Language Policies and Rights



Kyria Finardi and Renata Archanjo

**Abstract** The paper reviews language policies and rights in Brazil discussing the washback effect of the government funded internationalization programs Science without Borders (SwB), English without Borders (EwB) and Language without Borders (LwB) in them. According to Archanjo, the SwB is the most expensive investment ever made in Brazil for international mobility in higher education for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.) areas and according to Finardi, the LwB investment in its offshoot English without Borders (EwB) program is both a consequence of the SwB and proof of the status of English in relation to other languages in that country. These authors also suggest that the SwB and LwB/EwB programs have also promoted and influenced language policies and rights in Brazil and that multilingualism is yet to be equally addressed in those programs. The paper describes the contemporary linguistic and political landscape in Brazil before addressing the washback effects of the SwB, EwB and LwB programs in that country and which are related mainly to the promotion of language policies and rights in Brazil.

**Keywords** Language policies and rights · SwB · EwB · LwB · Brazil

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## 1 Introduction

The twentieth century has expanded the role of culture and its importance in the way our late-modern societies developed and were shaped into a global structure. Stuart Hall (1997) presented a foundational text in which he discussed the centrality of the concept of culture and its constitutive position in all aspects of human social life. The concept of culture, together with that of languages, understood as representational systems used to translate all activities into meaningful acts, have also become central. Cultural revolution is, in this sense, also a language revolution. As stated in Finardi, Santos, and Guimarães (2016) and elsewhere (for example, Archanjo, 2016a), globalization with its positive and negative effects (e.g., Blommaert, 2010; Bourdieu, 1991) has emphasized the centrality of language, people's mobility and diversity creating a complex scenario of superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007).

The strict definition of mobility is related to the action of changing positions, in other words, changing the place or the state of something or someone. Movement can be described as an abstract act, despite the fact that the concept of mobility is always related to time and space and is always meaningful. Indeed, as depicted in Tim Cresswell's book "On the move" (2006), the concept of mobility concerns, above all, movement within contexts of power. It involves the idea of displacement as a socially produced motion, embedded in ideology and social-historical meanings.

In ancient times, the concept related to an idea of stability and fixity. As we come to modern and post-modern times, instability, fluidity, and diversity become features of the concept of mobility that also represents a certain way of contemporary life. As a side effect of one of the forces driving globalization, mobility relates to the workforce, tourism, asylum-seekers, soldiers, terrorists, goods, and as this paper intends to show, mobility also relates to political movements and rights. In the knowledge society, it also relates to the academic population who seems to see in the transfer and circulation of knowledge a path for development and social change.

In this scenario, language education is key, as put forward by Archanjo (2016a), citing Romaine (2013), who claims that, since development and social change intertwine with education, without universal language education we can only talk of monolingual education which reproduces, rather than reduces, inequality of access. According to Finardi et al. (2016), the teaching/learning of additional languages (hereafter, L2)<sup>1</sup> which is part of language education, has a very important role in the maintenance of national cohesion (e.g., Finardi & Csillagh, 2016); the expansion of access to information online (e.g., Finardi, Prebianca, & Momm, 2013); the expansion of access to education online (e.g., Finardi & Tyler, 2015); the social inclusion of language minorities (e.g., Ortiz & Finardi, 2015); the fight against negative effects of globalization such as the commodification of language education (e.g., Finardi, 2014) and the circulation of academic production (e.g., Finardi & França, 2016). According to Finardi (in press) and Archanjo (2016a, 2016b),

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<sup>1</sup>The term additional language is used here to refer to any language but the first/native language.

**Table 1** Distribution of publications in English in *Arts & Humanities Index* 2006 per country

Country	Number of publications
United States	18.617
England	5.776
Canada	1.788
Australia	970
Scotland	792
Germany	590
Netherlands	408
France	356
Wales	335
Italy	322
Israel	276
New Zealand	251
Ireland	209
Spain	191

Source: Adapted from Hamel (2013)

L2 teaching also has the potential to promote multilingualism and more egalitarian linguistic rights.

Regarding the role of L2 teaching/learning in the internationalization of higher education, often taken as a synonym and consequence of globalization (Jenkins, 2013), Vavrus and Pekol (2015) claim that the internationalization of education cannot be separated from globalization and it coincides with neoliberal policies and the decline of financial support to universities forcing them to look elsewhere for financial support. Still according to Vavrus and Pekol (2015), internationalization/globalization benefits the Northern hemisphere more than the Southern hemisphere. Finardi et al. (2016) claim that the bias towards English might explain these North-South differences. Finardi et al. (2016) cite Hamel's (2013) example of the bias towards English perceived in a review of the international academic production of the Arts & Humanities Citation Index in 2006, showing that papers written in anglophone countries mainly in the Northern Hemisphere, are more likely to be published, as shown in Table 1, adapted from Hamel (2013) and cited in Finardi et al. (2016).

This bias still persists when the language is changed to Spanish, as shown in the analysis of the same journal for publications in Spanish in the same year and where it is possible to see that the United States has more entries than Spain, Chile and Mexico (Table 2).

In this scenario, plurilingualism<sup>2</sup> and multilingualism in general and English knowledge in particular play a very important role in the access to educational

<sup>2</sup>According to Finardi (in press), plurilingualism refers to a situation where a person has competence in more than one language whereas multilingualism refers to multiple languages coexisting in the same context. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) promotes plurilingualism as a shift in perspective towards the use of



**Table 2** Distribution of publications in Spanish in *Arts & Humanities Index* 2006 per country

Country	Number of publications
United States	245
Spain	205
Chile	45
Argentina	28
Mexico	27
France	22
Canada	7
England	6
Italy	6
Peru	5

Source: Adapted from Hamel (2013)

opportunities and in the development of humanistic and technical knowledge. Those effects can be felt worldwide but in the Southern hemisphere, the lack of plurilingualism coupled with the lack of multilingualism policies in general and of English knowledge in particular are perhaps more evident as suggested by Archanjo (2016a), Finardi (2016a, 2016b) and others. So as to provide a glimpse of the washback effects of internationalization programs in language policies in Brazil, we first describe the linguistic and political panorama in that country with its government funded internationalization programs Science without Borders (SwB), English without Borders (EwB) and Languages without Borders (LwB) and then discuss possible aftermath effects on language policies and rights in that country.

## 2 Linguistic and Political Panorama in Brazil

Despite the 216 languages<sup>3</sup> spoken in Brazil, most Brazilians are monolingual and speak only the official language, Portuguese. There are more Brazilians emigrating than foreigners coming to Brazil nowadays,<sup>4</sup> though this scenario was very different

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additional languages by removing the pressure to achieve perfection since this concept emphasizes the fact that a person's competence in a given language interacts and contributes to the growth of communication skills as a whole. According to the Council of Europe this perspective entails that the aim of language education is not seen as simply to achieve 'mastery' of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the 'ideal native speaker' as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place.

<sup>3</sup>The number of individual languages listed for Brazil is 236. Of these, 216 are living and 20 are extinct. Of the living languages, 201 are indigenous and 15 are immigration languages such as Italian, German, Pomeranian, Ukrainian and Polish (Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (Eds) *Ethnologue*. 19th Edition. <http://www.ethnologue.com/country/BR>).

<sup>4</sup>According to an organization called The Foreigner ([www.oestrangero.org](http://www.oestrangero.org)), there were 940,000 foreigners in Brazil in 2013 (less than 0.5% of the population of more than 200,000,000) and more than 3 million Brazilians abroad (around 1.5% of the Brazilian population) according to a report

in the nineteenth century when Brazil received a lot of immigrants, especially Italians, Spanish and Germans and in the twentieth century when Brazil received many Japanese, Syrians and Lebanese. Lately, immigration flows to Brazil are not European-centered and most immigrants are socially displaced and come from countries with economic, social and often conflicted or disadvantaged situations like Haiti, Palestine, Bangladesh and African countries such as Angola, Nigeria and Cape Verde. For the present as for the past, language rights and language policies are demanding issues and even more so when they are intertwined with political and economic instabilities in the host country.

As suggested by Leffa (2013), Archanjo (2016a), Finardi (2016a) and many other Brazilian authors, the reflection on and elaboration of language policies that promote understanding and tolerance among cultures, languages and identities and that stimulate plurilingualism, multilingualism and equal rights and opportunities is needed to as to foster social development and peace. In times of political turmoil and conflicts of representation such as the one currently experienced in Brazil<sup>5</sup>, the reflection on and promotion of policies that reflect people's wishes are even more pressing as the street demonstrations throughout that country seem to suggest.

Language policies are defined by Rajagopalan (2013, p. 21, our translation) as "... the art of leading the discussions around specific languages, in order to drive concrete actions of public interest to languages that matter to the people of a nation, a state or even larger transnational bodies." Grin (2003) reminds us that linguistic diversity entails some sort of conflict, which in turn calls for some kind of intervention in the form of language policies. The teaching of L2 is clearly a political issue since the very decision of which L2 to teach in schools is an example of a top-down decision and political/linguistic policy dictated by the legislative power in Brazil. Yet, the passing of laws that dictate public/linguistic policies cannot guarantee language rights in themselves for these laws must be implemented so as to become rights and effective policies.

Given the many unsuccessful attempts of the Brazilian Legislative power to pass laws that automatically convert into language rights, it is important to hear experts on the subject. Also, it would be important to ponder about the implications of these laws and the feasibility of their implementation before sending bills to the Legislative power. One such example came from a member of the Brazilian Legislative house who attempted to pass a law to protect the status of Portuguese as the official language in Brazil.<sup>6</sup> The bill proposed by senator Rebelo aimed to forbid the use of any foreign words and expressions in Portuguese. Such xenophobic attempts have been

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available at <http://www.brasileirosnomundo.itamaraty.gov.br/a-comunidade/estimativas-populacionais-das-comunidades/estimativas-populacionais-brasileiras-mundo-2014/Estimativas-RCN2014.pdf>. Accessed on January 5, 2016.

<sup>5</sup>We can say that the political crisis started with a conflict of representation, aggravated by and aggravating the economic crisis in Brazil and that culminated with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff on August, 31st, 2016.

<sup>6</sup>Rebelo (1999). Law Project N°1676/1999.

observed in other countries<sup>7</sup> too but in Brazil, a country known for its cultural diversity, such attempt was not only unfit but also inconclusive.

Leffa (2013) warns Brazilians against the danger of linguistic isolation in a country where the *only* official language is Portuguese and where Brazilians face many challenges to learn other languages, be them the language of their parents, heritage languages such as Pomeranian, Italian, German and Japanese, the language of their neighbors - Spanish - or other L2 s (Archanjo, 2016a). In a country with over 8 million square meters, 206 million people and many languages but not many L2 speakers, the development of plurilingualism and multilingualism in Brazil represents an overwhelming challenge for educational stakeholders, language policy makers and financial resources at any time and even more so in times of economic recession such as the one experienced since the second half of 2014.

It is important to note that the lack of policies which converge with the goals of the population can have serious social consequences as we have witnessed in the various protests that started in Brazil in 2013 with the Free Pass Movement and that spread to other social claims related to education, corruption, politics and representation, as we have witnessed in the protests pro and against president's Dilma Rousseff impeachment in 2016. One of the consequences in the case of the absence of language policies to guarantee the teaching of L2 in public schools is the abundant offer of private language courses, which, as suggested by Finardi (2014) and Archanjo (2016a), increase social inequality by creating a social gap between those who can afford to learn L2 in private language institutes and those who cannot.

### 3 Science Without Borders

In 2011 the Brazilian government launched an international mobility program called Science without Borders (SwB) whose aim, as stated in its homepage, was to revolutionize Brazilian education:

In the 1970's and 1980's, there was a significant number of Brazilians training abroad. Upon their return, these scientists contributed to the vigorous development of science produced in Brazil. Now, the country needs a new program to strongly encourage the internationalization of technology and innovation. The mobility program proposed here aims to launch experimentally the seeds of what could revolutionize the educational system in Brazil, exposing students to an environment of high competitiveness and entrepreneurship. (SwB Program<sup>8</sup>).

The Science without Borders program set the pace for a transformation in the Brazilian Higher Education system. It gave, for the first time, the opportunity to undergraduate students to experience a different academic environment, increasing

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<sup>7</sup>See "Loi Toubon" (1994) in France. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000005616341>

<sup>8</sup>Source: <http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf-eng/motivation>

international cooperation in science and technology, and engaging students into the global scenario of international education and academic mobility.

Since the beginning of the program, numbers were impressive. Designed to last four 4 years (2011–2014) and to be reedited later, the program granted 101.000 scholarships funded largely by public and partially by private resources. Although most grants were targeted at undergraduate students (80.000), the program offered scholarships in six other categories, including: Visiting Doctoral Studies, full Ph.D. degree, Post-doctoral Training, Talented Young Scientists, Specialized Training in Industry, and Special Visiting Researcher. Expectations were high in all ranges. For undergraduate students who, for the first time would be funded to take part in an exchange program abroad, for stakeholders in general, who were seeing as a fundamental outcome of the program the opportunity to count on a more specialized, experienced and qualified workforce and for the government whose political capital would surely be propelled with good results.

In 2014, a first positive evaluation was made by two national agencies, namely, the agency for the development of science and research known as The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPq and the Federal Agency for the Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education – CAPES. Both agencies reinforced that the primary goals had been successfully achieved by SwB. As an expected result, the Federal Government reissued the SwB Program funding 100,000 more scholarships for the following four 4 years (2014–2018).

However, the change in the Brazilian political scenario in the middle of the second implementation of the program was not expected. Thus, in 2015, political and economic turnovers in the country led to the intermission of SwB. According to the funding agencies, this would be only a temporary measure that would not affect ongoing scholarships, although new calls for participation were suspended. So as to face criticisms from certain political groups and from part of the civil society which were not fully convinced of the outspoken benefits of SwB, particularly associating the initiative to the political agenda of the sitting president and party, both under serious scrutiny, from June to November 2015, a special commission of the Federal Senate undertook a more in-depth evaluation in order to recommend future orientations for the continuity or not of the program.<sup>9</sup> The outcome extensive report published in December 2015 listed seventeen recommendations for the continuity of the program. Overall, most of the recommendations concerned issues of cost and funding and how these resources should be shared by a larger number of partners, including a more balanced distribution between public and private sectors as well as educational loans to help families and individuals who would also share, according to their financial situation, costs for the mobility program. Another important set of recommendations concerned the responsibilities between the academic partners – Brazilian universities and the universities abroad – in order to improve criteria of

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<sup>9</sup>Source: Comissão de Ciência, Tecnologia, Inovação, Comunicação e Informática. Senado Federal. Relatório CCT 2015 - *ml-co2015-11,320*

<http://educacao.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,governo-suspende-abertura-de-vagas-no-ciencia-sem-fronteiras-neste-ano,1767249>. Accessed: December 2015.

selection, students' follow-up, applicability of the studies, and the provision of quantitative and qualitative evaluations and reports.

Curiously, none of the recommendations addressed the issue of foreign language proficiency and its related impact on language and educational policies. Indeed, it not possible to know whether the lack of mention of foreign language proficiency was due to: (1) the fact that the issue of foreign languages had been taken for granted in view of the program Language without Borders explained in the next section, (2) because studies (Archanjo, 2015, 2016a) had shown that even if students had gone abroad with a poor language proficiency level – particularly in the early years of the program – they returned home mastering the L2, or more sadly (3) because the language proficiency factor might have been perceived as an issue of minor importance. One way of another, the report failed to specifically recommend a more serious and integrated approach to the language issue. Aiming to remodel the program transforming it into a Nation-state policy rather than a particular governmental policy, the Senate report, in avoiding specific language recommendations, also failed to promote Nation-state language policies and rights. This was perhaps done as a washback effect of two other programs, described in what follows.

## 4 Languages Without Borders

According to Finardi (2016a, 2016b), the Languages without Borders (LwB) program is a direct offshoot of the English without Borders program (EwB), which in turn is an indirect offshoot of the Science without Borders (SwB) program. It all began in 2011 when most of the more than 100,000 scholarships offered by the SwB program were not implemented because of the lack of L2, mostly English, proficiency of Brazilian candidates. So as to make the SwB program feasible, the Brazilian government launched the EwB program one year after the SwB program, in 2012. In the beginning, the EwB aimed to correct the lack of English proficiency of candidates to the SwB program but it soon became evident that this perceived lack of L2 proficiency was not found in SwB candidates only and so, little by little the EwB program took a larger dimension, being extended to all university students and not only to SwB candidates, perhaps, as suggested by Gimenez (2013) and Finardi (2016a), because it was aligned with the wish of most Brazilians to learn English.

Two years after the launch of the EwB program, it had already taken a larger dimension, detaching itself from its roots, those of a complimentary program to the SwB as suggested by Archanjo (2016a), having an agenda of its own. The EwB program stimulated/promoted the debate over language policies in Brazil, connecting applied linguists, L2 teachers and policy makers all around the country to discuss language policies and rights in a bottom-up fashion. As a consequence of this debate, the EwB program was extended and renamed Languages without Borders (LwB) in December of 2014 so as to encompass other languages in the discussion and promotion of multilingual language policies in Brazil. Unfortunately, the LwB was launched just when the economic/political crisis hit Brazil. As a consequence

of this, investments in this program were never the same as the ones made in its parent programs - the mother program - the EwB and the father program - the SwB. As it is, we can only speculate what could have happened to this program and to language policies and rights in Brazil if investments had been made in this program as they had been planned and made in SwB and EwB. Most of the investments in EwB revolve around the offer of three main actions to the academic community, all of which are free of charge: face-to-face English classes available to a small percentage of the academic population, an online English course and an English test – the Toefl ITP for all the university community. The idea of the LwB program was to offer the same actions, for free, for other languages apart from English and for all the university community in Brazil but as we said, the program was run over by the political/economic crisis that hit Brazil in the second semester of 2014 and so these actions were never implemented for languages other than English.

In 2016, just as Brazilian vice-president Michel Temer took office after Dilma Rousseff's impeachment, he announced severe cuts (and even some abolishments) in many governmental programs, due to the economic crisis that caused and was caused by the political crisis. Important investments in science and higher education were cut by more than half and SwB in its original form was discontinued. The LwB/EwB programs were the only programs standing tall and which did not suffer cuts in 2016 and that in itself is proof of the importance of these programs for the country and the recognition of the importance of discussing/guaranteeing language rights and policies in Brazil. These programs were able to set deep roots, deeper enough to avoid their discontinuity with the strong winds blowing the country. Another effect of these programs was the attention gathered in the international arena. To give one such example, the president of the LwB/EwB program, Denise Abreu e Lima was the only academic nominated in the Americas to the Distinguished Humphrey Leadership Award usually given to distinguished academics and offered in 2016 by Harvard to people who impacted/promoted relevant public policies in their countries. Another piece of evidence of the washback effect of the SwB/EwB/LwB programs in the promotion of public and language policies in Brazil was the invitation made by CAPES to Denise Abreu e Lima to propose language policies in that country.

## 5 Language Policies and Rights in Brazil

As reviewed in Finardi and Archanjo (2015), the Brazilian National Law of Education (Brasil, 1996) and the National Education Resolution (Brasil, 2010), state that all education in Brazil should be provided in its official language, i.e., Portuguese, with the only exception made for the indigenous communities which are entitled to education in their original language (Brasil, 1996<sup>10</sup>). The fact that the law recognizes the right of indigenous people to have education in their mother

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<sup>10</sup>Art.32, section IV, Paragraph 3.

tongue does not mean, however, that this is what happens in all indigenous communities, most of the time due to the lack of financial resources, proper teacher training/education and materials. The same can be claimed by the deaf community who, despite having the Brazilian Sign Language recognized as a co-official language<sup>11</sup> since 2002 by the Brazilian Constitution, which entitles deaf people the right to have bilingual education from early childhood to higher education, more often than not these people cannot see their language rights guaranteed in *de facto* schools who lack teachers who are proficient in Brazilian Sign Language. The case of heritage languages is very similar. They gained recognition in the National Inventory of Linguistic Diversity (INDL) as a reference of Brazilian Culture but did not succeed in integrating educational curricula of public schools in more than a few, rare municipal initiatives of immigrant communities.

When it comes to foreign/additional languages, and as stated by Finardi and Archanjo (2015), the Brazilian educational law (Brasil, 1996) recognizes that foreign language instruction is necessary and should be included as a compulsory component in the curriculum of basic education from 5th grade on (Brasil, 1998). Moreover, this law suggests that the choice of language will be made by the school community, according to its possibilities and needs. In the secondary level (Brasil, 2000, 2006), a second foreign language may be included in the curriculum as an option but among the foreign languages that can be chosen, Spanish must be one of the options pursuant to Law 11.161 (Brasil, 2005).

Whatever the reason – and there were several ones from ideological, economic, diplomatic and political perspectives (Del Valle & Villa 2006; Archanjo, 2016a, 2016b) – for the legal choice that favored Spanish and not any other foreign language in the national curriculum of Brazilian basic education, this particular language policy should be evaluated in regards to what and whom it was benefitting. To be clear, it is not a matter of campaigning for one language over another but to understand that the underlying ambiguity and bias in Brazilian language policies for basic education seems to be out of tune with internationalization policies which clearly favor the teaching of English in higher education.

As suggested by Finardi and Archanjo (2015), the fact that the Brazilian Law of Education determines the compulsory teaching of one modern foreign language in primary school, the choice of which is optional, coupled with the suggestion made by the same law to include Spanish in the curriculum of secondary education is at least contradictory. These authors concluded that there is more than one language policy regarding the teaching of L2 in Brazil: one for primary education and another one for secondary education, and as we saw in the description of internationalization policies enacted in programs such as SwB, LwB and EwB, there is yet another language policy for higher education, clearly demonstrating the need for a review and alignment of language policies and rights in Brazil.

The consequences of those top-down policies not only affect language policies but also language education, as pointed out earlier. What is enacted by laws, what is embraced in school curricula and what is sought by people in different settings

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<sup>11</sup>Law N°10.436/2002 enacted by the decree N°5.626/2005.



reveals an absence of common ground. However, what should be of concern is the criticism about the adequacy and usefulness of the languages that are being promoted whether in a top-down or in a bottom-up perspective. In other words, why or to whose interest was Spanish promoted in Brazilian laws? Should English be promoted instead because it seems that this is what people want or because it appears to be the language that plays a global role in technology and the knowledge economy (Ricento, 2015a)? Is English the language that will help the country to boost development, increase the job market perspectives, and promote social change reducing inequality? Again, are educational policies and their washback effect in the school system (public and private) in line with language policies? As Ricento (2015b, p.135) observes “inequality often correlates with unequal access to social goods and services that provide opportunities for socioeconomic upward mobility”. If language policies are targeting results that are not linked to education or the other way round, there is no way to achieve goals of sustainable development and social change.

## 6 Conclusion

This paper aimed to reflect on language policies and rights in Brazil discussing the washback effect of Brazilian government funded internationalization programs SwB, EwB and LwB in them. The analysis of language policies and rights in Brazil suggests that most language policies are proposed by the Legislative power of that country in a top-down fashion, without careful planning and consideration of expert advice and social claims to feed decision-making and bill-propositions. Perhaps that may at least partially explain the low uptake of public measures and the inefficient implementation of these laws. What is more, these top-down rules dictated with an almost complete disregard for the wishes/claims of the population could explain the political crisis the country has dived into and which started with a claim for more representation.

The analysis of Brazilian internationalization programs SwB, LwB and EwB showed that only the latter resisted public scrutiny and economic/political turnovers in Brazil, perhaps because it was both aligned with long-lasting wishes of the population on the one hand, and also because the EwB was successful in creating a network of teachers and language experts that proposed language policies in a bottom-up fashion. Another reason which may partially explain the resistance/success of the EwB even in face of economic crisis is the fact that this program was able to integrate top-down and bottom-up actions and wishes, thus, having a washback effect on language policies and rights in Brazil, at least in higher education. Because of the close link between the EwB with the SwB and the LwB programs, we cannot say that the EwB alone did the trick of impacting language policies and rights in Brazil since it would not have been able to do it alone, though it was perhaps the most significant in terms of washback effects on language policies and rights in that country.

One should not neglect the effects of the wider sociohistorical, sociocultural and socio political context within which language policies are planned and implemented. Historical, geographical and political links among Brazil and other nations have proved to be very influential in the way languages are consumed and used in the country. What should be of concern to all of us is the extent to which and on what basis citizenship rights – like language and educational rights – are aligned with policies in the country. As a reminder to not fall into a naïve response, let us conclude saying, citing May (2015, p. 46) that “Language policy is always imbricated with questions of history, power, politics and (in)equality”.

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# Language Policy in Reality – A Study of Language Use in Two English-Taught Courses at University of Copenhagen



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**Abstract** Due to internationalization of higher education, the amount of English taught programmes at university level in non-English countries is increasing. Internationalization has the purpose partly of recruiting international students and partly of making national students more attractive on a global job market. Furthermore, Danish politicians see internationalization as having the potential of adding value to a given programme. In practice, internationalization seems to mean shifting to English, but at the same time there is a desire for continuing development of the Nordic languages in academia. Thus, the principle behind the language policy at University of Copenhagen is parallel language use, representing an ideal linguistic situation where two languages are used for academic purposes. This paper presents findings from a study of language use in two courses taught in English at UCPH suggesting that the participants choose language based on communicative efficiency rather than language policy. One group of students uses English and Danish socially and professionally. Danish is, however, only at the Danish-speaking students' disposal, which creates two groups of students and asymmetry on the course. This represents a dilemma that needs to be addressed in the form of a more detailed language policy of parallel language use along with a far greater concern for the didactics of parallel language use in the classroom.

**Keywords** Higher education · Internationalization · International students · Parallel Language Use Strategy · University of Copenhagen

## 1 Introduction

Due to the ongoing internationalization of higher education, the number of courses and programmes taught in English at Danish universities is steadily increasing. According to figures collected by Wächter and Maiworm (2014), Denmark is the

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country in Europe with proportionally most degree programmes using English as the medium of instruction (cf. also Lauridsen, 2015). From a governmental point of view, internationalization is presented as having strong potential to add value to higher education: “An international environment of learning promotes disciplinary quality within the individual programmes and international competences in the students” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 25). However, in order to survive in a competitive climate, universities believe they need to internationalize in order to attract limited government funding, to feature prominently on world ranking lists and to recruit international faculty as well as students, all of which could be reasons behind the increasing number of EMI courses. From the perspective of planners and administrators, it seems as though there is a close connection between internationalization and the use of English Medium Instruction (EMI); the consensus seems to be that the way to internationalize higher education is to offer more programmes and courses in English. This reflects an acceptance of the “market” as the decisive factor in universities’ decision-making, including those related to language choice; international students are seen as consumers wanting to buy their education from the best supplier, making learning a product for sale. English is seen as the gateway, possibly both symbolically and functionally, to participating in the global market of higher education and research (Hultgren, Gregersen, & Thøgersen, 2014), and therefore, internationalization for traditionally non-English universities has increasingly meant a shift in language from Danish to English – the University of Copenhagen (UCPH) no exception.

However, UCPH is a public university and therefore has societal obligations, including public outreach. The fear of domain loss, in this case the loss of the academic domain, has featured prominently in the scholarly debate in Denmark and in the Nordic countries in general (Nissen & Ulriksen, 2015). To address these concerns and still promote internationalization (as anglicization), the principle behind the language policy at the UCPH is *parallel language use*, a principle meant to reflect an ideal linguistic situation where two (or more) languages are used for academic (and administrative) purposes. The use of two languages does not entail duplicating everything but rather that “relevant activities take place in Danish and English” and that “neither Danish nor English is marginalized at the Danish universities” (Ministry of Culture, 2003, p. 48).

In some language policy documents, the term parallel language use is employed as it was originally intended, that is to ensure that the local language will continue to play a role. In others, as in the policy of UCPH, the term seems to be used for the promotion of English (Hultgren, 2014): “As part of the increased concentration on international study programmes, the University of Copenhagen will implement parallel language policy as quickly as possible, *so the relevant materials and courses will be available in English*” (University of Copenhagen, 2012, p. 31, italics added by the author). Noticeable is also that despite increased multilingualism at internationalized universities, including UCPH (Holmen, 2015), Danish language policies are almost exclusively concerned with only the two languages of Danish and English.

When talking about language policy, researchers distinguish between language policies imposed “from above” and the ways in which the phenomenon of language choice unfolds on the ground in the situated interactions of the social actors directly

involved in it (Ljosland, 2014). Language policies imposed from above are useful as guidance, but language use actually exists only in each individual act of speaking (and writing). Ljosland (2008) also talks about “English from above” and “English from below” in reference to language choice at the university. Due to language policy decisions and a desire to expand the talent pool, the university, as an institution, is put under pressure from above in relation to the inclusion of international students. At the same time, there is a communicative pressure from below that may not be possible to regulate and control by any language policy. We thus have to distinguish between political initiatives on the one hand and students’ and teachers’ choice of the language in which they communicate most efficiently on the other.

This paper takes a bottom-up approach to language policy in order to explore how parallel language policy plays out in the micro-context of two EMI courses at the University of Copenhagen, and to investigate which roles the use of the global and the local language, English and Danish respectively, take on in social, cultural and academic relations.

## 2 Methods

To explore how parallel language policy plays out in the micro-context of the international classroom, the present study drew on the principles and methods of linguistic ethnography, which lends itself well to exploring language use in situated practices. Linguistic ethnography assumes that language is part of a bigger social and cultural context and that these “contexts for communication should be investigated rather than assumed” (Rampton, 2007, p. 585). By combining participant observation with interaction analysis, linguistic ethnography seeks to address the potential shortcomings of using either technique in isolation; the methodology of ethnography makes it possible to look at a context that may not be present in interactional analysis, while the linguistic focus may not be accessible through participant observation and field notes.

The ethnographic fieldwork and data collection of the present study was carried out in two EMI courses over three months, from the courses started to the final examinations (which were both oral and written). The two courses were master’s level EMI courses in two different programmes in two different faculties at UCPH: Veterinary Medicine at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences and Food Science at the Faculty of Science. The Faculty of Science has implemented parallel language policy by offering all master’s degree programmes in English, while keeping Danish as the language at bachelor level, whereas the Health Faculty only offers certain courses in English. The official language policy of an EMI course is that everything is in English. In addition to this difference in the overall implementation of the language policy, the two courses were chosen because they differed in terms of the career profiles and thus in the number of international students enrolled in each course; students of Veterinary Medicine are taught with the purpose of being employed in Danish society as veterinarians, whereas students in Food Science are

preparing for international jobs in larger food companies. The programmes thus differ in terms of the expected ‘language for work’ that students will be using. As one might expect, there were no students who did not understand Danish in the veterinary course, whereas over half of the students in the food science course were international (i.e., non-Danish speaking). Interestingly, the teacher of the veterinary course was a mother-tongue English speaker who understood Danish, and the teacher of the food science course had Danish as his first language.

The data consists of recordings of teaching and teaching-related activities, such as group work, and of semi-structured interviews with 11 students (6 Danish and 5 international) as well as 4 teachers (3 Danish and 1 English) from the two courses. The interviewees were selected on the basis of nationality (linguistic background) and interests (academic background and future) as well as participant observation. From participant observation single examples of social interaction were selected for microanalysis. This type of interactional sociolinguistics focuses on generating “detailed and fairly comprehensive analyses of key episodes [of social interaction], drawing on a range of frameworks to describe both small- and large-scale phenomena and processes” (Rampton, 2006, p. 24). The analyses thus focus on how language choice unfolds on the ground in the situated interaction of students and teachers and thereby functions as a reality check to the current language policy. The data excerpts come from interviews, group work and oral examinations and are examples of parallel language use in classroom-related situations. They have been chosen as good examples of reoccurring events.

### **3 Analysis – A Reality Check**

This section is divided into three subsections representing different points of view on the reality of parallel language policy as it plays out in EMI courses. The first subsection presents attitudes towards the use of two languages as expressed by the university population. The second subsection represents the actual use of two languages in teaching-related activities. The excerpts presented in these subsections stem from Veterinary Medicine. The third and last subsection presents data collected in Food Science and point to complications in connection with internationalization and the implementation of a language policy of parallel language use at UCPH.

#### ***3.1 Parallel Language Use – Why?***

The first two excerpts present the view that there is a need for two languages, and at the same time, presents positive reasons for parallel language use as expressed by a student and a teacher in interviews. I did not ask about parallel language use in the interviews, but about language attitudes and self-reported linguistic competences.



Therefore, the excerpts are spontaneously given expressions of advantages or disadvantages of parallel language use rather than a direct result of my questions.

### **Ex 1: Interview, Student, Interview Conducted in Danish**

Line (L), Danish

*Der er mange ting der taler for at vi skulle have mere på engelsk. Også fordi så ville vi være bedre stillet internationalt men det er bare sådan at når man står ude i klinikken eller i hvert fald ude hos landmanden og man ikke kan sit lægsprog [på dansk] så er de sådan "okay ved du ikke det"?*

*There are many reasons why we should use more English. Also because then we would be better off internationally, but when you're in the clinic or at least out at the farm and you don't know the layman's terms [in Danish] then they say "you really don't know that?"*

This veterinary student associates English with increased international success, but at the same time she acknowledges that the Danish language plays an important role as the language of/used in the local community. This reason for parallel language use is thus based on the need for competences in different languages, in future jobs. This perspective is also captured by Airey (2011) in his disciplinary literacy triangle (society, workplace and academy), which locates disciplines according to the emphasis placed on communicative competence in different languages within each of the three sites. Veterinary Medicine in connection to workplace (and society) can be described as gravitating towards a need for competences in Danish, but in connection to the academy as having a need for competences in English.

The next excerpt justifies the reason for parallel language use with reference to pedagogical concerns. When using languages, we express identity (Blommaert 2005), and this can be compromised when using a language that we do not fully master. An imposed language choice can therefore seem as an interference in our personality, e.g., if the language user's academic and linguistic identity does not match. The teacher in the interview excerpt below has English as his first language, but he understands Danish perfectly within the context of his subject, making it possible for the students to choose the language they are most comfortable with. He talks about the opportunity of using two languages like this:

### **Ex 2: Interview, Teacher, Interview Conducted in English**

Francis (F), English

*I like to think whether it's right or wrong that it also makes it easier for them because they know they can revert back, so in some ways they get the best of both worlds*

Airey (2010) showed that English causes problems for some students in explaining science concepts, and this teacher is aware of possible linguistic barriers in relation to producing academic knowledge in a second language, and as we will see in the forthcoming excerpts he invites students to explain difficult disciplinary knowledge in their best language. He sees English as the language of science, and keeping in mind that Veterinary Medicine is not just a profession but also a science, English has to play a role in Veterinary studies. Therefore, he sees EMI as a necessity, but

keeping Danish as the language “they can revert back to” promotes learning. Thus, when both languages are used in the classroom, the Danish students, in his view, get “the best of both worlds”.

### 3.2 *Parallel Language Use – How?*

The next three excerpts are specific examples of two languages being used in connection to expression of knowledge - they stem from oral exams and thus exemplify code-switching between Danish and English in the most formal situation in education, the exam. The exam plays an important role in relation to the students’ academic success and thereby their future. Thus, it is a highly relevant situation to investigate in relation to language policy and language acquisition.

In the first excerpt, the student switches from English to Danish, presumably to give a more precise answer to a question posed by the examining teacher.

#### **Ex 3: Exam**

Francis (F), teacher, English; Student (S), Danish

1. F why would focusing the ultrasound beam have optimized the image?
2. S it is because øhm the **resolutio øhm ja øh opløsningen** er opdelt i tre
3. planer aksial og lateral og elevationel og ved den laterale der hvor beamet er
4. tyndest det er der hvor der er bedst opløsning
5. F mm and the lateral resolution is best for where is it?
6. S **it øh det** bedst ved fokus

The teacher, Francis, explained that the way the students speak English normally tells him if they are properly prepared for the exam, because their English would then be close to textbook English. This student, however, answered the question perfectly in Danish, he told me, indicating that she developed an academic language in Danish even though she was taught in English and has been reading for the exam in English. An explanation for this could be that she has discussed and thought in Danish about texts she has read in English. Thus, Danish plays a role in English taught classes even if that role is not intended by policy makers. A South African study (Paxton, 2000) showed that students, when taught in their second language, English, translate disciplinary concepts from English to their home language for understanding of the concept. It also showed that the use of two languages provided an opportunity to get an even greater understanding of the concept than if only one language was used. In this excerpt there is reason to believe that the student would be able to answer the question in English. She makes an attempt to start the English word “resolution”, which in fact is the right word for the Danish word “opløsning”. Furthermore, the scientific term “aksial”, “lateral” and “elevationel” are the same in English as in Danish. The reason for choosing to switch to Danish could be that she finds it more efficient and feels safer to communicate in Danish, even if the official language is English.

The next excerpt is also an example of code-switching in the exam situation. This student also switches from English to Danish, but in this case it does not make her answer more precise or efficient, which the teacher's answer "måske (maybe) is a good word" shows.

#### Ex 4: Exam

Teacher (F), English; student (S), Danish

1. F but why is it gets better in the focalzone?
2. S mm øhm im not im not quite sure but is it like i < have that> what
3. F < you can think of an example yep>
4. S when i have the transducer and i change the focals i change the focus so
5. that i can see eh i'm **deeper in the (0.5) jeg er** dybere nede i vævet så
6. jeg vil kunne se øh jeg laver mine æh jeg gør mine bølger klarere lydbølger
7. klarere nede dybt i vævet hvor jeg gerne vil se
8. F ja
9. S ved også at så ændrer jeg mine frames måske
10. F måske frame rate yeah
11. S ja
12. F it's måske is a good word hh

The student first attempts to answer in English with no further success. She then switches to Danish (line 5), but the opportunity to speak Danish does not make this student's answer more precise. This may tell us that her problem is just as much an issue of comprehension of the content as it is a language issue. This shows that even if the use of two languages could lead to better understanding, it is not a given, and that didactic quality in parallel language use is not guaranteed. Nonetheless, she is given the opportunity to reflect and thereby the opportunity to reach an answer - if not the right one, then at least a reflected one. This opportunity, however, is not one given to the international students.

#### Ex 5: Exam

Francis, teacher (F), English; student (S), Danish

1. F okay yeah why is yeah
2. S because the (.) can i please do this in Danish?
3. F på dansk or svensk or whatever you want yeah

Francis invites students to speak the language they want to check whether problems are caused by students having to explain difficult concepts in a second language or whether they are due to underlying problems with comprehension – a service he cannot offer to, for example, Chinese students. In this excerpt, the student asks if she can answer in Danish, and Francis answers "in Danish or Swedish or whatever you want". One might say that this shows a willingness to embrace more languages and to make the student feel comfortable in the language of her choosing, but in reality there is a limit to which languages can be chosen. "Whatever you want" in reality means languages he understands, which makes it a principal issue of rights. If it had been a Chinese student asking if he could do it in Chinese, the answer would presumably be very different. Parallel language use in this case

becomes a privilege that only some students have the legitimacy to claim the right to. However, the examination excerpts are examples of how parallel language use can be seen, as to the student's possibility to answer in Danish or switch between the two languages. These three excerpts show that parallel language use actually is encouraged, and that it gives some students an extraordinary opportunity, but at the same time it potentially excludes international students, because it is not an opportunity every student can be given.

## 4 Parallel Language Use and Internationalization

The exam excerpts give insight into the potential exclusion of international students, whereas the next excerpts are examples of how the use of Danish can very explicitly exclude international students. In this regard, these examples can be seen as showcasing a negative consequence of a 'loose' language policy.

The first excerpt shows teacher-mediated group work in a group consisting of three Danish students and one Chinese student. While the excerpt is not unique in regards to exclusion of this Chinese student as a relevant participant in the conversation, it stands out in being the first time the student expressed herself as not being able to understand. In the excerpt, the students are discussing their assignment.

### Ex 6: Group Work

Ulla (U), teacher, Danish; Lise (L), Danish; Nadia (N), Danish; Kristine (K), Danish; Cho (C), Chinese

1. U men i kan få nogle plastikposer til det her
2. L < vi har↑ plastikposer>
3. N < vi har plastikposer>
4. U det har i.
5. N indtil videre har vi bare lagt det i en papæske vi havde derinde så kunne de
6. lige stå og lade
7. U de skal lige dampe lidt af ja
8. N og så ville bare putte dem i poser bagefter
9. xxx ((small talk))
10. C what did we. ((N and U still talking)).
11. K because they want us to take the table↑ we have all our stuff on in to the
12. other room so it's not down in liceratur because it's not their room so they
13. cant (.) use it when we are gone so and i think she feels
14. C she want us to leave
15. K ja i think maybe
16. C and should we ((background talk))
17. K yeah and she just said that we can put the meringues in some bags and put
18. it in there

Even though the teacher knows that the Chinese student, Cho, does not understand Danish, she approaches the group in Danish giving them a practical message.

Two of the Danish students answer and the interaction between teacher and students continues in Danish, excluding Cho from participation. After a few exchanges, Cho asks the third Danish student, Kristine, what the teacher is saying (line 10). Kristine answers, taking on the double role of a (silent) participant in the conversation and a translator for Cho. Cho is unable to participate in the conversation and is therefore in need of a translator to understand what is going on. In an interview conducted after this group work took place, the three Danish students without prompting mentioned to me that they often doubted Cho's English proficiency and therefore sometimes chose to speak Danish to each other due to efficiency. But even in situations where English was spoken by the Danish students, Cho still struggled to participate in conversations. Gumperz (1982) states that miscommunication might be due to different cultural codes for interaction, and this might also be a factor in this study group. Cho, however, seems to lack the competence (either linguistic or cultural or both) to communicate, and the cultural differences might therefore be invisible or explained by other issues. I was unable to conduct an interview with Cho for those same reasons.

The next two excerpts are from an interview with another Chinese student. In this case, the student received interview questions on attitudes towards different languages and on the experience of studying in Denmark in a second language, English, in advance in order to prepare his answers in English. This student is a special case in being a PhD-student following this Food Science master's course.

**Ex 7: Interview, Interview Conducted in English** Guozhi (G), Chinese.

*When I have lunch in my part in my section all of Danish people use Danish to talk and I cannot involve into the topic because I have no idea what they talk about. So that's a big question if I get job in Denmark I have to involve into the group it's better to learn Danish if I want to stay here.*

In this excerpt, Guozhi points out that he cannot participate in lunch talk because the other students are speaking Danish when interacting with each other. Guozhi construes this problem as a linguistic problem (lack of proficiency in Danish), and he shows integrative motivation (Norton, 2000) for learning Danish in stating that if he knew Danish then he could participate in the conversation. This excerpt raises the issue of which competences are needed for social integration. Thøgersen (2010) distinguishes between parallel language practice and parallel language competence. Parallel language practice refers to situations where two languages are used in a more or less parallel way. Parallel language competence, on the other hand, is linked to a genre-specific bilingualism, where a given situation is possible to execute in both languages because all participants are able to use both languages. An example of this is the excerpts from the exam shown above. Here the teacher had receptive competence, but not productive competence in both languages. It might as well be enough for Guozhi to understand Danish to know the topic of the conversation, but to answer in English. In an academic discourse competences are related to activities and to master a language means being able to perform linguistic acts. However, his

problem might not just be of lesser linguistic competence, but might as well be lack of social and cultural competence.

The last excerpt is an example of how culture is closely connected to language. Guozhi tells me a story of how he has to think about what he is allowed to ask about when speaking to “people from western countries”. Here it is not a question of linguistic competence but rather a sociocultural competence. According to Kramsch (1998), language competence is being able to change language use from one social setting to another. Here Guozhi might be able to ask the question, but he does not know how a conversation would go in this new culture.

### **Ex 8: Interview**

Guozhi (G), Chinese

*One of Chinese PhD-students ask him how old are you and I think he feel not very comfortable. He just said 400 years. You know in China it's normal question to ask people's age maybe salary and maybe how much is your house. In western country maybe that's a personal question you don't want to be asked.*

Even though he is motivated to speak English, it is not easy for him. In this excerpt he tells an anecdote about a Chinese PhD-student asking a Danish colleague about his age, and the Dane answered evasively. Guozhi's explanation is one of cultural differences, and by using “in Western countries” he distances himself from the foreign culture. The gap between the culture he comes from and the culture he wants to be integrated in means that his chance to speak and practice the foreign language, English, is undermined. He is not just linguistically uncomfortable, but just as much culturally and socially uncomfortable. This shows that sociocultural competence plays a role in language acquisition. This includes a shared understanding of how a conversation would normally go, but this is often taken for granted by language users, and might influence the communicative process (Knapp, Enniger, & Knapp-Potthoff, 1987).

## **5 Discussion and Conclusion**

The study presented in this paper was conducted as a reality check of the language policy at UCPH, and reality shows complications to the intention - not just with respect to parallel language use, but also in relation to internationalization. The overarching language policy for the university is based on the principle of parallel language use. However, since the policy is vaguely formulated and lacking in concrete details, it might function more at a symbolic level. Perhaps we could even go as far as to call it a non-policy. The policy calls for the implementation of parallel language use as making materials and course available in English. That does not, however, keep students and teachers from using both Danish and English - even in a situation as formal as the exam. These results are similar to results from studies conducted in Norway and Sweden by Ljosland (2008) and Söderlundh (2010). This study, however, contributes with data from exam situations, a high-stakes situation that is difficult to gain access to.

The first two excerpts in the analysis section of this paper confirms the importance of the principle of parallel language use as it is presented in the scholarly debate; they lend support to the argument that “parallel language use is a necessity – only its implementation can be discussed” (Gregersen & Josephson, 2014, p. 45, my translation). The next three excerpts show how Danish and English are used in academic situations and how both languages are used in the students’ strategies to perform as good as possible. Danish plays a role in being the language of the surrounding society and (therefore) the first language of a large proportion of the students. In an exam situation, giving students the possibility to use Danish seems to be a sensible way of testing for either language issues or comprehension issues, and in these cases it makes sense to use both languages. However, it creates unequal opportunities for national and international students. This raises a discussion of how to handle a situation where allowing Danish students to speak Danish is an advantage, but not at the same time a direct disadvantage for the international students. In situations like this, a more detailed language policy would come in handy.

Furthermore, the last three excerpts show issues related to the inclusion of international students – both professionally and socially. The examples show that switching to English Medium Instruction does not necessarily make an international environment of learning - even when this actually involves using English. There are still cultural and social (including socio-academic) differences that need to be recognized and overcome. The excerpts with the Chinese students presented in this paper are extreme, but not unusual, examples of the lack of a common frame of reference taken for granted in Western Europe in relation to studying in English and knowing codes for socialization (i.e., knowing how to ask and what to ask both in class and during breaks). These examples also show us that the discussion of language policy has to take communicative competence and language acquisition into account if the intentions behind the international university are to become a reality.

As stated in the introduction, one of the reasons for internationalization is that an international environment of learning has the ability to add disciplinary quality within the individual programs and international competences to the students. But all of the excerpts show that language is an issue. First of all, they show that in fact you cannot talk about internationalization without talking about language, and you cannot talk about language without talking about culture, and that these issues call for more specific and detailed language policies and good practice principles, e.g., on how to avoid lowering the academic level in courses taught in English, and ultimately to add quality. Other Nordic studies has shown that the quality of EMI courses suffers from being set up without consideration for practical and pedagogical implications of teaching and learning in a foreign language, English (Hellekjær, 2007, 2010; Hellekjær & Westergaard, 2003; Ljosland, 2008). One way to look at the missing link between language policy and reality and to open the door for participation of all students could be to think about the didactics of parallel language use. Parallel language use when used as a resource could e.g., bring more languages and cultures into play in discussing a term. This, however, requires that policy makers, teachers and students are aware of it, and it has to make sense to everyone involved - linguistically, culturally and academically.



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**Part III**  
**Epilogue**

# Resonances: Second Language Development and Language Planning and Policy from a Complexity Theory Perspective



**Diane Larsen-Freeman**

**Abstract** This chapter begins by introducing Complexity Theory and five of its theoretical tenets that have implications for both second language development (SLD) and language planning and policy (LPP). The tenets have to do with qualities of complex systems: emergence, interconnected levels and timescales, nonlinearity, dynamism, and context dependence. These tenets are then applied to SLD. I go on to show that these same qualities of complex systems hold resonances for LPP. However, descriptive resonances are not sufficient for building a bridge between SLD and LPP. Thus, I conclude that a bridge must be constructed of a deeper awareness, namely that both second language learners/educators and planners/policy makers operate in a complex world, where interventions need to be situated, contingent, and adaptable, and where agents of change need to be prepared for unexpected outcomes.

**Keywords** Complexity Theory · Context dependence · Dynamism · Language planning and policy · Second language development · Timescales

## 1 Introduction

It is difficult to trace the origin of Complexity Theory to a single source. Further, it itself is but one participant in a spectrum of theories. Complexity Theory is different from Chaos Theory, although I linked them in my first publication on this topic (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), and I will draw on Chaos Theory for some of the discussion in this chapter. In addition to Complexity Theory and Chaos Theory, theories having kinship with them are Dynamic Systems Theory, Complex Systems Theory, Relational Dynamic Theory, and Complex Dynamic Systems Theory. What these theories attempt to account for is also variously described as complex systems, dynamic(al) systems, complex adaptive systems, and often some combination of these.

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What needs to be made clear is that despite the variety of names for these theories, their sources, and their explananda, they have a great deal in common. For one thing, they are all transdisciplinary. I call them such for two reasons. First, they emanate from a number of disciplines, and they have been drawn upon to study a broad range of disciplinary phenomena. For example, they have been applied in epidemiology to study the spread of diseases, in business to trace the vicissitudes of the stock market, and in neuroscience to model neural networks.

Second, they are transdisciplinary in linguist Michael Halliday's (Burns & Halliday, 2006) sense of engendering new intellectual themes. Transdisciplinary thinking is thinking which transcends individual disciplines and which redefines the structure of knowledge. Halliday cites structuralism (a system is composed of many parts) and evolution (a system is subject to the arrow of time) as being earlier products of transdisciplinary thinking, and he identifies Complexity Theory and systems thinking as being potential sources of new intellectual themes. Complexity Theory entails systems thinking, where the whole of a system is considered, rather than simply focusing on the parts that comprise the system. Thus, instead of searching for the fundamental elements in nature, systems theorists study relationships among patterns that emerge in a given context (Capra & Luisi, 2014). It is an ecological view, rather than a mechanistic one.

It is emergence, along with other tenets that I will discuss below, that make Complexity Theory (CT) cohere as a theory. I will briefly touch upon five tenets. Next, I will turn to how CT helps us think about second language acquisition, which I will call second language development (SLD). Finally, I will attempt to relate all this to Language Planning and Policy (LPP), in order to address the theme of the conference "Bridging Language Acquisition and Policy," at which an oral version of this chapter was presented.

## 2 Five Tenets of Complexity Theory

With the preceding as a backdrop, what follows is a selective rendering of five tenets of CT:

### 2.1 *Complex Systems Exhibit Emergence*

From the interaction of the components of a system, a new, perhaps unanticipated, pattern emerges. Importantly, then, "complexity" does not mean "complicated." Although complex systems can be comprised of many components, that alone does not qualify a system as complex. Complexity is where "the aggregate behavior of the system has properties that are qualitatively different from the sum of the" components that comprise it (Van Geert & Verspoor, 2015, p. 539).

There is no preformationism and no central executive in a complex system. The patterns are spontaneously produced through self-organization (Kauffman, 1995, calls this "order for free"). The organization of the system stems from its interaction

with the environment and the interaction of its internal components. Relevant to the former is the fact that complex systems are open systems. This means that they take in and expend energy, matter, or information (depending on the type of system) while showing the emergence of order. In other words, they are about form over matter. A helpful example is an eddy in a stream (Thelen, 2005). The whorl is formed in the constant flux of the stream. It would disappear or change if the flow of water were altered. And yet, the water droplets that comprise it are never the same; they are continually passing through. Furthermore, the eddy is not only situated in space (at a specific place, defined by the contours of the streambed, the height of its banks, etc.), but also in time. For example, the velocity of the water in the stream that created the eddy in the first place could be due to the depth of the snowpack in the mountains the previous winter and the pace of the spring melt.

Witherington (2007, p. 137) writes:

The ‘design’ of the action *emerges* from the interactions of multiple factors rather than preexisting the very processes that engender it [Oyama 1985]. With its focus on emergence rather than design, the ... framework of self-organization likewise eschews single-cause accounts in favor of a focus on relations, embodying a shift from an atomistic, isolated element stance toward a relational stance...

## 2.2 *Complex Systems Are Composed of Interconnected Levels and Timescales*

The components (inanimate elements or animate agents) of a complex system are interconnected and context dependent (Juarrero, 2000, p. 26). They can operate at different nested levels of scale (e.g., from neurons in neural networks to whole ecologies), and across different timescales (from nanoseconds to supereons). “Any action... is tied into this web of connections to multiple systems which can influence and constrain it” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 198).

The constraints enter into a cycle of reciprocal causality where both local-to-global processes of construction and global-to-local processes of constraint operate (Witherington, 2011, p. 66). In other words, a complex system is built bottom up from the iterative interactions of its “local” components; subsequently, the system entrains what follows in a top-down direction, resulting in a continuous cycle of activity.

## 2.3 *Complex Systems Are Nonlinear*

The smallest fluctuation in a system can be amplified many times over, with each ensuing outcome not commensurate with what caused it. This phenomenon is popularly known as the butterfly effect in Chaos Theory, named for the system’s sensitivity and the fact that a small change at one time can have a big effect at a later time:

Not only will the future of such systems be uncertain but attempts at control or corrective measures will give unpredictable results. Systems sometimes enter regions of highly erratic and chaotic behavior. In such cases it becomes impossible to predict the future behavior of the system even when based on its entire past history. (Peat, 1990)

Generalizations about the systems are possible, despite their unpredictability. For instance, one can make generalizations at the level of the system dynamics, as I have been doing. However, the unpredictability of behavior in complex systems should make it clear that searching for simple linear causality is misguided.

## ***2.4 Complex Systems Are Dynamic***

Complex systems are continuously changing, and may achieve periods of stability, but never stasis. The change may sometimes be abrupt, such as one man's tragic self-immolation in Tunisia, which has been described as the precipitating factor in launching the Arab Spring. Or, the change may be gradual—the rising of the level of the sea or the melting of the polar ice gap due to global warming. Of course, climatic change may not seem abrupt—but that is the point—one needs to take into account the timescale that one is looking at. It is certainly abrupt in geologic time, but not necessarily in human lifespan time (although these days, this point could be contested).

Dynamic systems are said to chart a trajectory in state space (an attractor) over time through an iterative process. Once there is perturbation to the system, the system can leave its relatively stable state, although it sometimes returns to its attractor when the perturbation has ceased. Because of a complex system's sensitivity to initial conditions, there are multiple pathways by which the system can evolve and “the same ‘cause’ can, in specific circumstances, produce different effects” (Urry, 2005, p. 4).

## ***2.5 Complex Systems Are Interconnected with Their Environments***

They adapt to their environments, but in so doing, the environment itself is changed. It is not adaptation in the Darwinian sense of survival of the fittest; rather, it is ongoing local adaptation to a particular environment. “A system is never optimally adapted to an environment since the process of evolution of the system will itself change the environment so that a new adaptation is needed, and so on” (Heylighen, 1989, p. 2).



### 3 Complexity Theory and Second Language Development<sup>1</sup>

CT lends itself to a rather different interpretation of second language acquisition than what has been conventionally posited. In fact, it is different enough that I believe the same phenomenon is better called “second language development” (Larsen-Freeman, 2015) in order to underscore its ongoing nature—a process without end—and one in which language is not treated as a commodity that one possesses.

First, let me sketch the big picture, adapted from Larsen-Freeman & Cameron (2008, p. 198):

A complexity perspective on [language development] highlights connections across levels of human and social organization, from individual minds up to the socio-political context of language learning, and across timescales, from the minute by minute of [interaction] to ... learning lifetimes. Any action in ...learning is tied into this web of connections to multiple systems which can influence and constrain it... In particular, learning involves the connected brain-body-world of ...ecological approaches (Van Lier, 2000; Kramsch, 2002; Clarke, 2007).

To be more specific about what takes place in learnable moments, it is claimed that language learners “soft assemble” (Smith & Thelen, 1993) language patterns to create meaning to meet their present communicative goals. This soft-assembly process is a kind of bricolage, which involves their reusing any and all patterns they have constructed in languages in which they have experience. Learners adapt their language resources to the exigencies of the local and changing conditions of each task or activity. Frequent and reliably contingent form-meaning-use constructions<sup>2</sup> are made available to learners through a social process of co-adaptation, with interlocutors adjusting to each other over and over again. Each iteration reuses the elements generated in the previous procedure(s) of soft assembly, always starting at a different point. Thus, each meaningful adaptive experience in the “here-and now” of context contributes to attractors emerging on a longer timescale. And, once an attractor is established, it recruits subsequent attempts by the learners to construct a system (reciprocal causality). In short, one’s language resources develop out of the interaction of learning heuristics and socially situated domains of language use. These two are mutually constitutive (Hult, 2010a).

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<sup>1</sup> Before proceeding, I need to acknowledge that I am aligning my CT comments with organismic relational theory, where reciprocal causality is intrinsic (Overton, 2013). I should also point out that many others have contributed to thinking about CT’s contribution to SLA (for a list, see Larsen-Freeman 2017), and so the following observations are a compilation of many individual contributions.

<sup>2</sup> I am using the term “constructions” in a general way in order to avoid “the linguist’s fallacy” (Herdina and Larsen-Freeman in preparation) of considering learners’ perceptions and productions to be linguistic units of some sort.

No two people, even those in the same classroom, or even monozygotic twins (Chan, Verspoor, & Vahtrick, 2015), will experience exactly the same regularly occurring and recurring social contexts of language use or resolve them in exactly the same way. L2 learners' history of usage across situated, local iterative contexts will create differences in the learning trajectories, with the details of each developmental trajectory unique. Therefore, claims at the level of the group/population can be made, but it cannot be assumed that they apply to individuals. This is partly due to the fact that the present level of language development is critically dependent on what preceded it. For instance, knowledge of the L1 results in a "learned attention" to language whereby the processing of the L2 proceeds in L1-tuned ways (Ellis, 2008). The languages and cultural schemata of a multilingual interact, both facilitating and complicating the learning of new language (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). The influence of one language on another is bidirectional. There is also a fundamental nonlinearity to learning. There can be many potential opportunities to learn a particular construction with no apparent results; then, one day it appears among a learner's resources. It works the other way, too, when "fast-mapping" enables learners to use a new construction after a limited exposure.

As the learner's developing system makes its way through state space, it arrives at attractor states, periods of stability, but never stasis. Language and its learning have no endpoints. Both are unbounded. Learning is not climbing a ladder; it is not unidirectional. It is driven by lived experience. In any event, what is psycholinguistically real language for learners is not identical to what is descriptively real for linguists, so it is important not to conflate the analyst's view with that of the participants.

Language learners/users have the capacity to create their own patterns and to expand the semiotic potential of a given language, not just to conform to a ready-made system. Therefore, any infelicities from a standard-language perspective provide evidence of learners' creativity and are not, in any linguistic sense, distinguishable from the linguistic innovations of other language users. The creativity does not rest on applying a finite set of rules, but rather is due to the learner's making use of heuristics such as analogy, statistical preemption, abduction, and recombination. It is certainly not a matter of assembling an internal model of an external reality, but rather of a learner's constructing a unique system. This can be seen in an example from Cooper (1999) in his statement about a child learning its first language (L1). In discussing language as a complex dynamic system, Cooper (p. 5) makes the point that a child is perfectly capable of producing certain vowel sounds exactly as its mother does. However, the child does not copy the sounds. Instead, the child transforms the sounds into its own range.

In addition, because context is no backdrop to this development, it is empirically possible to separate the learner from the context (which includes the learner and others), but it makes no sense to do so. Can you tell the dancer from the dance as Kramsch (2002), quoting Keats, put it? Along these same lines, it is not the input, but the learner's perception of the affordances in the ever-changing linguistic context that is fundamental to learning; there is a complementarity between the learner

and the environment. Affordances reunite learners with the environment (Van Lier, 2000).<sup>3</sup>

A person's history of interactions builds up collections of experiences that contribute to the language, cognitive, and emotional resources that are available to be drawn on. These resources include symbolic systems as well as somatic ones, e.g., synchronizing of bodily posture and the use of gesture. The resources include conative ones, too, such as the degree of motivation, attitudes (learners', and in the case of children, their parents'), and investment. However, these so-called individual differences are not stable and monolithic learner traits. For instance, every time we use language, we are making choices, and by so doing, negotiating our identities:

Learners' social identities, subjectivities, and sense of agency are further significant to the development of their multilingual repertoires in that they influence the kinds of L2 activities and the particular semiotic resources for realizing them to which they have access; and, vice versa, their growing repertoires and abilities will influence their identities, and their roles, rights, status, means, and agency within their learning communities. (The Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 32).

For many individuals, of course, additional language learning will tend to be solely enacted through the mediation of instruction and literacy. Here, LPP's Cooper's (1989) conditions for success still find support: using the target language as a medium in the classroom, making sure that there is incentive to learn, and making clear that there are opportunities for using the language outside the classroom. One implication of these conditions is that lecturing and recitation may not be efficacious modes of language use in the second language classroom. Instead, learning is claimed to be enhanced when teachers provide opportunities for meaningful expression and activities/tasks that are iterative (as opposed to repetitive) (Larsen-Freeman, 2012). There is also support for the need to teach students to adapt their language resources to the demands of a continually changing situation (Larsen-Freeman, 2013b), and it is imperative to understand that in the important realm of learning transfer, learners transform their knowledge; they do not merely implement knowledge in the form in which it was delivered through instruction (Larsen-Freeman, 2013a).

It has also been suggested that adopting translanguaging practices (García & Li Wei, 2014), where all of students' language resources are drawn upon, instills mutual respect among students for all of the language varieties they bring to school (Agnihotri, 2007). In addition, these days favored practices include use of the L1 to scaffold L2 learning in multilingual classrooms, a modification of the earlier insistence on complete L2 use at all times. Then, too, with the growing awareness that multilingual speakers of different languages are different from monolinguals in many ways, the use of native speaker performance as a benchmark has been discouraged, replacing it with norms based on the performance of proficient bilinguals (Ortega, 2013). Moreover, any sort of language assessment should be self-referential, as opposed to defined by the distance from some target language ideal, in order to

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<sup>3</sup>Van Lier wrote this from the perspective of sociocultural theory, a theory that has a different origin from CT, but one that nonetheless overlaps somewhat in its theoretical perspective.

counter the discourse of deficiency (Larsen-Freeman, 2014). What is clear is that bilingual proficiency should not be measured by how accurately learners can produce each language according to monolingual norms (Farr & Song, 2011). It is also important to bear in mind that affordance, as opposed to input, is what leads development while simultaneously recognizing that second language development is nonlinear and not identical from context to context nor from individual to individual (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008).

Then, too, the classroom is not insulated from the influence of the greater socio-political dynamics, which are often enacted in the classroom. Therefore, societal attitudes and ideologies about language are critical, and the status of a learner's native language or dialect may affect the learning of a new language. Finally, what is important in a complex dynamic system is the interdependent relationship of the factors that comprise it. Such a focus on relations in understanding emergence necessitates a rejection of single-entity notions of efficient causality.

If all this seems complicated, well, it is. And yet, as we know, SLD is accomplished both within and outside the classroom by younger and older learners from every walk of life. Although evidence for the existence of a critical period is inconclusive, we likely lose our ability to be "citizens of the world" (Kuhl 2010) in the sense that pronunciation in a language is language-bound. In any case, intelligibility will be the goal for many learners, and any additional language learned should in fact be additive, not subtractive.

#### 4 Bridging to Language Policy and Planning (LPP)

Now, I turn to issues of language planning and policy. I should begin this part of my chapter by noting that CT is no stranger to LPP. Hornberger and Hult (2008) called for an ecological orientation to language policy, an orientation very much in keeping with CT. Further, Hult (2010b) explicitly mentions "the complexity turn" in conjunction with LPP. And, a 2013 special issue of *Current Issues in Language Planning*, edited by Hogan-Brun, explores the connection between language planning and complexity. Also, a recent book (2015) by Filipović, *Transdisciplinary approach to language study. The complexity theory perspective*, has a great deal to say about the connection. There is doubtless other work of which I am unaware; however, from reviewing these publications alone, it is easy to detect resonances between CT, SLD, and LPP, on which a bridge might be constructed.

One resonance is the influence of ideologies: "...ideas and beliefs about language not only are an 'object of study' but also color LPP research itself. Like any other form of sociolinguistic research, LPP research is not neutral (cf. Gorter, 2012, p. 100); Edwards 2012, p. 431)..." (Darquennes, 2013, p. 15). And, as I pointed out earlier, neither is SLD.

A second resonance is that as with complex systems more generally, LPP operates at many levels (Darquennes, 2013; Hogan-Brun, 2013; Hult, 2010a). Ricento and Hornberger (1996, p. 419) put it thusly:

We suggest that LPP is a multilayered construct, wherein essential LPP components—agents, levels, and processes of LPP—permeate and interact with each other in multiple and complex ways as they enact various types, approaches, and goals of LPP.

So, there is some obvious resonance here between CT, SLD, and LPP. All three perspectives concur in that change can take place (at all levels and scales) from above or below (Hornberger, 1996), although perhaps the best result can be achieved when they act in concert.

A case in point is bilingual education in the state of Utah in the United States (Larsen-Freeman & Tedick, 2016). In 1979, one family, whose child had already had a successful language immersion education experience in another state before the family moved to Utah, helped launch a Spanish immersion program in a local school district. The initiative spread to other elementary schools in the district, ultimately involving eight schools. However, there were inadequate financial resources to sustain it. This all changed in 2009, when legislation and funding came together in support of a state-sponsored language immersion model.

There were, of course, a lot of twists and turns in the three decades between the family's initiative and the garnering of government support. The point is that the impetus for this development came from the bottom-up, and it was sustained by support from the top. This coordination would seem to be desirable, if not essential, to secure lasting change. A pertinent observation from a CT perspective in this regard comes from Lemke and Sabelli (2008, p. 128). They state that a change in our thinking away from input-output causal models to ones that interconnect actors, practices and events across multiple levels of organization also entails the need for coordinated changes throughout a system. On a related note, Cooper (1989, p. 168) also comments on the fact that there cannot be a simple cause for the complexity of social change:

In sum, the forces that promote social change are many and their relationships complex. Each factor operates in a world which contains all the others. Thus theories which rely on one or another of these factors as *the* cause of social change are almost certainly wrong.

Later (p. 177), Cooper adds, “a single-factor theory of language planning is no more viable than a single-factor theory of social change more generally.” And, I hope that I have put to rest the idea that there can be a single factor theory of SLD, although some have tried to advance one.

I also hope that I have also made it clear that a defining characteristic of SLD from a CT perspective is the emergence of unforeseen consequences, due to the dynamism and nonlinearity of the system. Again quoting from Cooper (1989, p. 169) for evidence of a resonance with LPP:

Today most sociologists and anthropologists reject those deterministic theories which view social change as the product of inexorable forces that shape its course in a predetermined direction.

Along related lines, Hogan-Brun (2013, p. 362) contributes: “There is a sense of LPP as a process with multiple layers of participation and constituent factors affecting language as a system that is dynamic, not predictable and continually changing.”

In writing about complex systems and educational change, Lemke and Sabelli (2008, p. 128) add:

The conceptual basis of complex systems ideas reflects a change in perspective about our world. This perspective emphasizes both the limits of predictability as well as the possibility of understanding indirect consequences of actions taken, both positive and negative....

In discussing policy more generally, Peat (1990) puts it this way:

Over its life, a non-linear system can enter a series of quite different economic regimes and behaviors. And, it must be stressed, these changes need not always be the result of external perturbations or “shocks” but are the natural unfolding of the internal dynamics of the system. Policy makers would therefore have to take into account that a system may, at one time, be insensitive to control, and at another infinitely sensitive and that major changes in a system may not always be the result of external factors for an apparently negligible effect may, given time, swamp the behavior of the system.

Indeed, with human interventions, no matter how well-intentioned, a major concern of social change agents is the indirect consequences, also known as the law of unintended consequences. There are abundant examples around us in the world today. Unfortunately, those that come to mind most readily have to do with the assumption that a brief military incursion would take care of what was seen to be an unacceptable situation. In any case, from a CT perspective there are no independent interventions (Lemke & Sabelli, 2008, p. 128): “proposed changes at one level have implications at other levels...” Lemke and Sabelli (2008, p. 122) advise:

... we will see that any focal pedagogical ‘innovation’ introduced into a tightly constrained school system is in fact a series of embedded innovations at levels *above and below* the focal intervention, and strategies for all levels have to be considered coherently.

Especially helpful in promoting understanding in this regard are Lemke and Sabelli’s (2008, p. 122) key questions regarding *Relationships among Subsystems and Levels* [in a complex system], some of which are:

- What next higher level of organization determines constraints on the dynamics at the focal level?
- How do all subsystems subject to those constraints interact to constitute the dynamics of the higher level?
- What degrees of freedom remain at the focal level after the constraints are allowed for?
- What units of analysis at the next level below interact to constitute units (or processes or patterns) at the focal level?
- What characteristics of those lower level units determine the range of dynamical possibilities at the focal level?
- What are the typical attractors of the focal level dynamics? Under what conditions is each attractor dominant for the (sub-) system?
- How do new attractors emerge over the history of the system’s development and the evolution of this kind of system?

In addition, as we have seen, in complex systems, processes operate on different time scales.

This same observation applies to LPP: “(e.g. a law can be implemented within a few months, but it may take a person several years to master a new language)” (Hogan-Brun & Hogan, 2013, p. 493).

As for timescales, Lemke and Sabelli’s (2008, p. 120) questions include:

what is the range of timescales characteristic of the critical processes that enable the system to maintain itself? ...one that takes into account the differing timescales at which different levels of the system function?

Another resonance between LPP and SLD, it seems to me, is the recognition of the importance of initial conditions and the context-embeddedness of complex systems. As Bastardos-Boada, long a complexivist, writing in the special volume on *Current Issues in Language Planning* (2013, p. 371), notes:

Any starting point will be shaped by [many factors].... All of these factors are the result of historical events and, on a case-by-case basis, the representations may vary widely. As a consequence, objectives that may be very easy to achieve in one place can become difficult or impossible to achieve in another situation that may, by contrast, have all the other factors of intervention working in their favour.

This point is borne out again in the narrative of the bilingual education success in Utah. During the 2008–2009 planning year, Utah stakeholders visited immersion programs throughout the United States, drawing on the strengths they perceived and designing a program customized for the conditions in Utah. From a CT perspective, effective educational solutions are ones that are customizable, i.e., maximally adaptable. The success of the Utah model illustrates this quality very well. It also calls into question the issue of “transfer” of any solution, and underscores the challenges of scaling up an innovation:

Perhaps the most important of these lessons is [the localization effect:] adaptation of models for system reform to local conditions matters more than efforts to replicate successes elsewhere, without extensive knowledge of how the systemic variables differ between environments. (Lemke & Sabelli, 2008, p. 125)

A dynamic systems perspective requires that all behavior be analyzed in the context where it occurs. “Behavior is not something that a person ‘has’—instead, it emerges from interactions between the individual and his or her contexts” (Rose, Rouhani, & Fischer, 2013, p. 153). Another lesson and one of the ironies for LPP is that although these systems consist of many levels, the point of leverage may be very simple—the tipping point. In the case of Utah, one family advocated for bilingual education. Without their initiative, who knows when or if this education innovation would have been realized. By the same token, another small point of leverage can be found in the fact that the advocates for bilingual education had a sympathetic listener in Utah Governor Jon Huntsman, himself a former US ambassador to China and a fluent Chinese speaker, and his “tipping point” presence no doubt contributed to the state support the initiative received and to its enduring success.



Speaking of tipping points, Blommaert (2014, p. 16) remarks:

... the stochastic nature of sociolinguistic systems ought to sensitize us to the fact that statistical frequencies or averages might not be the key to understanding a sociolinguistic environment: the really relevant elements – triggers of large-scale change for instance – can be exceptional, deviant and statistically insignificant.

## 5 Conclusion

In conclusion, in light of the significant uncertainty, it would seem that any LPP must be contingent. Any planning will have to establish optimal conditions for language development (conditions as discussed by Cooper (1989) in light of acquisition planning, to which I referred and added to in the section of this chapter on SLD) while simultaneously recognizing that such development is nonlinear, uncontrollable, and not identical from context to context nor from individual to individual (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008).

As for the practical consequences of managing unpredictability, Lemke and Sabelli recommend adaptive management. Like design-based research, adaptive management is a “process of testing alternative hypotheses through management action, learning from experience, and making appropriate change to policy and management practice” (Lemke & Sabelli, 2008, p. 120). Indeed, as Peat (1990) observes, “what is called for is constant flexibility, for a continual watchfulness in which information is constantly being gathered and the existing description modified.”

If language policies are viewed as essentially instruments of *social control* (Wiley, 2015), particularly ones that are not benign (restrictive, repressive and erasure policies), they may ultimately be unsuccessful for there is no central authority in a complex system that can force all members to conform; furthermore, complex systems that are diverse are the most robust (Page, 2010). Instead of the logic of determinism which yields predictable consequences, CT suggests that, in complex dynamic systems, the system has the freedom to develop along alternative trajectories, what Osberg (2007) calls the logic of freedom. Thus, for a complex system, while a system’s potential might be constrained by its history, it is not fully determined by it (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 8–9).

Of course, saying that there are resonances between SLD and LPP is not the same as building a bridge between them. Indeed, one would not want to cross a bridge of resonances! Perhaps, though, the resonances are indicative of something deeper, more meaningful, which is shared by SLD and LPP, namely the need to recognize and operate in a complex dynamic systems world. If this is so, then many implications follow, not the least of which is that agents of change (language educators and language planners) need to give serious thought to what it means to plan and to implement instruction and educational policy for a complex system. For after all, a bridge will be sturdier when it is built on common ground. Complex dynamic system (CDS) theorists Steenbeek and van Geert (2015, p. 85) put it this way:

We started with questions such as how does “this” influence “that.” We hope to have demonstrated that the word *influence* does not refer to a simple relationship, but refers to something that takes place in the form of complex, iterative, time-scaled, situated processes. Applying process laws (i.e., starting from properties that belong to CDS) helps to take “influence” into account in a proper manner, that is, by doing right to the idea that the world is a CDS, which must be understood, investigated, and treated as such.

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# Inclusion in Education: Challenges for Linguistic Policy and Research



Mark Fettes and Fatemeh Mahbod Karamouzian

**Abstract** Educational policy in Europe is deliberately shifting towards a more consistent focus on inclusion, meaning provisions to ensure effective education in mainstream classrooms for all students. A considerable gap exists, however, between the policy and research frameworks of the inclusion movement, on the one hand, and research and policy on language teaching and learning, on the other. This chapter explores the reasons for this, and what engagement with inclusion may imply for teaching practices in schools, for programs of teacher education, and for scholarly thinking and practice in second language acquisition and language policy. It argues that inclusion requires a rethinking of the settings, participants, and questions central to such areas of research.

**Keywords** Europe · Inclusion · Language policy · Multilingual education · Teacher education · Second language acquisition

## 1 Introduction

Both Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Language Policy (LP) research are centrally concerned with the management and learning of languages in multilingual contexts. Such contexts are also, by their very nature, social, culturally and economically diverse. As such diversity has increasingly become a salient feature of urban settings across Europe, public school systems have been confronted with challenges for which they are ill designed. This in turn has led to increasingly widespread calls, on the part of governments, school systems, and individual educators, for “inclusion” to become a central goal of educational policy and practice.

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This chapter asks the question: What are the implications of educational inclusion for SLA and LP research? We proceed to answer this question in stages. First, how is inclusion defined within educational systems, what kinds of needs is it responding to, and what are the most important barriers to its success? Second, what does inclusion imply for teachers and teaching? Third, how do these various dimensions of inclusion bear on issues of language policy? Fourth, what kinds of SLA and LP research would be most relevant to schools and school systems guided by an inclusion mandate?

As we hope to show, inattention to institutional and political context is a frequent limitation of language-focused research. By clearly and explicitly situating research agendas within a broad framework of inclusion, SLA and LP scholars can plausibly achieve greater relevance for their work and greater uptake of their conclusions and recommendations.

## 2 Inclusion: An Evolving Concept

‘Inclusion’ has become something of an international buzzword. It’s difficult to trace its provenance or the growth in its use over the last two or three decades, but what is certain is that it is now *de rigueur* for mission statements, political speeches and policy documents of all kinds. But although it is used so often now, people barely seem to think about its meaning any more. (Thomas & O’Hanlon 2007, p. vi)

*Inclusive* and *inclusion* are popular words in government agendas these days. For example, “inclusive growth” is a key aspect of the European Union’s *Europe 2020* strategy, including measures designed to promote “social inclusion” across a wide range of policy areas. While inclusion’s popularity undoubtedly has much to do with the word’s political appeal, it also implies significant changes in the way social policy is made at the regional, national and international levels, involving a much greater range of stakeholders in the process (Atkinson, 2009).

“Inclusion” has been used as a term in education for a long time, since at least the early 1970s. As such, it carries a certain amount of historical baggage that can cause confusion. Originally it was used to refer to students having special educational needs or disabilities, who for most of the twentieth century were segregated in separate schools, or in classes where they were essentially deprived of equal educational opportunities. The “inclusion movement” in education has sought to end such practices in favour of including these learners in mainstream classrooms, both across Europe and around the world (Lindsay, 2003; Pijl, Meijer, & Hegarty, 1997; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Based on the one hand on a view of educational access as a fundamental right of individuals, as influentially expressed in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization], 1994), and on the other on considerations of effective schooling (Ainscow, 1991), this sense of “inclusion” is still widespread in the educational literature.

Most relevant to the present chapter, however, is the way in which the original movement for *educational* inclusion has been overtaken and absorbed, over the last fifteen years or so, by the broader goal of *social* inclusion. From an original focus on policies and practices around special needs students, the goal has now become

that of guaranteeing effective education for all students — including those from linguistic and cultural backgrounds different from their teachers', or those traditionally favoured in the national school system. According to UNESCO (2009), inclusive education is currently considered to be “an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination” (p. 3). It is easy to see how this conception represents a broadening of the concept of educational equity present in the Salamanca Statement, bringing it into line with the broader social inclusion goals alluded to above (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006; Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Hodkinson, 2005; UNESCO, 2008; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013).

A major difficulty with the term “inclusion” is the lack of clarity about the degree of change it implies. Is it meaningful, for example, to “include” special needs students in mainstream classrooms without ensuring they have additional support (Lindsay, 2003), or changing other aspects of how schools are structured and run (Ainscow et al., 2006)? If “inclusion” refers to other dimensions of students' identity as well, what other forms of accommodation are appropriate or necessary to ensure the wellbeing of all students? These questions have practical significance for teachers and schools throughout Europe (Donnelly & Watkins, 2011). Thus, in a given educational policy context, it is worth making the underlying ideological and conceptual frameworks explicit, and in addressing policy and practice on educational inclusion at the national and European levels, effort is required to achieve consistency within each country, and if possible, between European countries (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education [EADSNE], 2011).

Trends in both policy and scholarship, in recent years, have favoured more systemic approaches towards inclusion. For example, EADSNE, one of the key organizations promoting inclusive education at the European level, identifies (2009) the following key goals to guide the development of school systems in all EU member countries:

- Widening participation to increase educational opportunity for all learners;
- Education and training in inclusive education for all teachers;
- Organisational culture and ethos that promotes inclusion;
- Support structures organised so as to promote inclusion;
- Flexible resourcing systems that promote inclusion;
- Policies that promote inclusion;
- Legislation that promotes inclusion.

Likewise, British education scholars Booth and Ainscow (2002) in their influential *Index for Inclusion*, list the following points among the priorities for schools seeking to provide more inclusive experiences and outcomes for their students:

- Valuing all students and staff equally;
- Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality;
- Viewing the differences between students as resources to support learning, rather than problems to be overcome;



- Emphasising the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement;
- Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities.

In practice, a great deal depends on the attitudes, knowledge and skills of school administrators and other staff. There are approximately five million school teachers in the European Union, a figure that helps to convey the scale of change entailed in embedding inclusion as a central set of values and processes within schools. Such goals require a great deal of work to be carried out locally; they cannot be achieved simply by administrative or legislative decree. Indeed, one might locate the various understandings of inclusion on a continuum, from those most compatible with centralized command and control (linguistically, for example, this might consist in prescribing one standard national language taught to all students in all schools) to those requiring the greatest degree of local autonomy and responsiveness (linguistically, this might consist in locally specific models of bilingual or multilingual schooling available in students' first languages and/or dialects plus one or more national languages or languages of wider communication).

The clear implication of current European inclusion policies is to move schools farther away from the centralized model, while at the same time resisting trends towards the "marketization" of schooling (Göransson, Malmqvist, & Nilholm, 2013). Since the centralized model is the traditional and dominant approach to language policy in schools, it must already be apparent that this trend challenges some taken-for-granted features of the context for SLA and LP research. Before taking up the implications in more detail, however, we turn to the question of capacity-building as a key issue in the implementation of policies for inclusion.

### 3 Teachers and Inclusion

Teachers matter. They matter to the education and achievement of their students and, more and more, to their personal and social well-being. No educational reform has achieved success without teachers committing themselves to it; no school has improved without the commitment of teachers; and although some students learn despite their teachers, most learn because of them... (Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington, & Gu, 2007, p. 1)

In all situations, teachers play a vital role in providing quality education for inclusion (Florian & Rouse, 2009). It is the teacher who has to cope with a variety of students in class and implement the principles of inclusion in mainstream schools. If teachers are not trained and do not have the necessary dispositions, competences and skills to cope with diversity, all good intentions, policies, and laws are ineffective (EADSNE, 2011).

Teachers are considered to have a general responsibility to extend the boundaries of professional knowledge through reflective practice, research, and a systematic engagement in continuous professional development throughout their career. The inclusion agenda builds on this fundamental orientation, by insisting on teachers' need to enhance their ability to respond to a heterogeneous mix of students from different backgrounds and with different levels of disability and ability. A wealth of

evidence shows that teachers' dispositions, knowledge and skills are "the most important within-school factor affecting student performance" (European Commission, 2008). According to an influential OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) study, *Teachers Matter* (OECD, 2005), working with diverse learners requires teachers to expand their practices at a number of levels:

- **Individual level:** identify strengths and weaknesses of their students, and adapt their curricula and teaching in response to the increasing use and reliance on standardised tests.
- **Classroom level:** deal with multicultural learning environments and apply cultural knowledge of different groups of students.
- **School level:** develop and exercise management and leadership skills, become more interactive and collaborate with other teachers in order to plan and monitor school-level progress.
- **More broadly:** taking the initiative to engage parents and the rest of the community in their practices and classrooms.

Likewise, UNESCO in 2008 hosted a global conference on the theme of inclusive education, in which 153 Member States, including a majority of European countries, participated in the discussions and debates and issued a report that highlights the importance of teacher training for inclusive education. Specifically on capacity-building, the report included the following recommendations:

17. Train teachers by equipping them with the appropriate skills and materials to teach diverse student populations and meet the diverse learning needs of different categories of learners through methods such as professional development at the school level, pre-service training about inclusion, and instruction attentive to the development and strengths of the individual learner.
18. Support the strategic role of tertiary education in the pre-service and professional training of teachers on inclusive education practices through, *inter alia*, the provision of adequate resources.
19. Encourage innovative research in teaching and learning processes related to inclusive education.
20. Equip school administrators with the skills to respond effectively to the diverse needs of all learners and promote inclusive education in their schools.

(UNESCO, 2008, p. 20)

Beginning shortly after the UNESCO conference, and overlapping with the OECD study *Educating Teachers for Diversity* (2010), EADSNE undertook a three-year review of "teacher education for inclusion" in 25 European countries (2011, 2012). As a result, a *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* was developed which included the areas of competence that could be developed during initial teacher education programs and be used for professional development later:

- Valuing learner diversity: difference is considered a resource and an asset to education;
- Supporting all learners: teachers have high expectations for all learners' achievements;
- Working with others: collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers; and

- Personal professional development: teaching is a learning activity – teachers take responsibility for their lifelong learning.

(EADSNE, 2011, p. 10)

In summary, there is now a considerable body of scholarship and official documents at various levels that draws attention to the key role of teachers in making educational systems more inclusive, not only in policy but in practice. Yet teachers, by and large, are not receiving the opportunities and support needed to develop inclusive practices, along with the underlying attitudes, knowledge and skills. “Although most initial teacher education programs include some form of diversity training,” OECD researchers summarize, “it is often in the form of a single module or elective, which is unlikely to have a major, lasting impact throughout teachers’ careers” (OECD, 2010, p. 30). This clearly stems from systemic problems in the way teachers are trained; for example, the Communication on *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education* (European Commission, 2007) draws our attention to the fact that “in many Member States there is little systematic coordination between different elements of teacher education, leading to a lack of coherence and continuity, especially between a teacher’s initial professional education and subsequent induction, in-service training and professional development” (European Commission, 2007, p. 5).

The limitations of existing programs reinforce the well-known tendency for teachers to teach in the ways they themselves were taught. Evidence from a wide range of countries shows that resistance to new practices and ways of thinking, at the level of individual teachers and of schools as institutions, can be deep and lasting. One recent regional study that highlights such forms of resistance is a report by the European Training Foundation (ETF) on seven countries in the Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia (Pantić, Closs, & Ivošević, 2011). Drawing on the Country Reports from this region, and focusing on Serbia as a representative case (Macura-Milovanović, Pantić, & Closs, 2012; Pantić & Wubbels, 2010), the authors highlight the following features of national education systems that make progress towards inclusion difficult to achieve:

- Fragmentation of teacher education, including a lack of pedagogical training for “subject teachers” in high schools and vocational schools, isolation of special education from mainstream teacher preparation, and no coordination between pre-service and in-service training;
- Inadequate preparation of teachers for working in diverse classrooms, and persistence of a “medical model” of educational needs that leads teachers to view difference as deficiency;
- A segregated model of schooling that isolates learners with special educational needs (including some Roma children) in separate schools;
- A system of accreditation that places no weight on preparation for work with diverse learners, nor takes account of actual educational outcomes.

The authors note that, as part of a nation-wide educational reform (NARS [National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia], 2009), Serbia has adopted legislation that includes inclusive schooling as a basic principle. Considerable support has

been provided through institutions such as the World Bank, the OECD and the EU to help expand the capacity of the school system for inclusion, through in-service training, the preparation of teacher assistants, and the development of guidelines and resource materials. The main obstacle to change, therefore, is not the adoption of inclusion as a policy goal. Rather, such obstacles are to be found in entrenched cultural and professional beliefs and practices, the relative autonomy of systems of teacher education, and the potential conflict of inclusion with competing policy goals and frameworks – issues that are not limited to Serbia or the Western Balkans, but are ubiquitous across Europe (EADSNE, 2011; Pantić et al., 2011; Zgaga, 2015).

Central to this problematic is the question of teacher agency. In the study of Western Balkan countries, for instance, Macura-Milovanović et al. (2012) perceived “an undue reverence for and aspiration towards specialism, for real or apparent ‘expertise’, accompanied by a lack of belief in the potential of the ‘generalist’ to cope with diverse classes, and sometimes a generalist’s lack of willingness even to try” (p. 33). This contrasts with what Pantić and Florian (2015) call “an underlying assumption” of inclusive pedagogy: “that teachers are competent agents in possession of the necessary knowledge to teach all children [and that] this knowledge is put to use in support of everyone” (p. 342). For example, teacher trainers in the Western Balkans sometimes taught about “disabilities and specialist approaches”, but very rarely highlighted the importance of “how so-called specialist approaches might actually be useful to a far wider range of students” (Macura-Milovanović et al., 2012, p. 33). Similarly, teacher education in the Balkans and elsewhere is often premised on “well-established ways of thinking about teaching as an individualistic teacher-classroom activity,” while inclusion generally relies on “working collaboratively with other agents, and thinking systematically about the ways of transforming practices, schools and systems” (Pantić & Florian, 2015). The notions of teacher agency embedded in teacher education practices can thus be surprisingly restrictive, and reinforce underlying social and institutional biases that work against the broad goal of inclusion.

The inescapable conclusion is that inclusion has important implications not only for public compulsory schooling, but also for the institutions of higher education where teachers are trained. Because they generally retain considerable freedom of choice regarding their programs and curricula, even where state-imposed regulations and limitations exist, such institutions may insulate the school system from top-down pressure to change. Indeed, according to the West Balkans study already quoted, “the fragmented pre-service faculty-based system of teacher education remains the single most resistant barrier to the development of whole-school approaches to inclusive practices by all staff... The autonomy of higher education institutions makes this change one of the biggest challenges, and one rarely addressed by either policy makers or international assistance” (Macura-Milovanović et al., 2012, p. 35).

Current scholarship in a wide range of countries, undertaken with support from international bodies such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO, bears out this finding (Council of Europe, 2010; Forlin, 2010, 2012). These surveys of research, policy and practice confirm that a vast gap exists between the political goal of developing inclusive societies and schools and the ways in which teachers are currently being prepared for their key role in the process. At the same time, as the EADSNE

study concludes, “preparing teachers to respond to diversity may be the policy most likely to impact on the development of more inclusive communities” (2011, p. 78). It follows that SLA and LP research programs should pay much greater attention to teacher education than they have done in the past, if they are to have a measurable impact on educational practice.

#### 4 Inclusion in the Language Policy Context

To a large extent, policy and research on language education in Europe have developed in isolation from other issues affecting student participation in schools. This is presumably because the cure for linguistic exclusion is generally considered to be the acquisition of the standard national language, which schools are already designed to provide. Because of this monolingual and centralizing bias, national education legislation is not usually framed with migrant and multilingual populations in mind. Where they exist, policies promoting linguistic inclusion may underestimate the challenges involved, particularly the length of time required to achieve academic competence in a second language. Organizational culture and support structures at the school level are not typically oriented towards multilingualism. Teachers often lack skills and training in working in multilingual and multicultural settings, while school budgets may not allow for the hiring of additional staff with appropriate linguistic and cultural skills. In short, a comprehensive exploration of different factors confirms that linguistic inclusion in schools is a complex and multifaceted challenge.

As just noted, effective education in the national language is the traditional means by which school systems seek to foster the social and economic inclusion of students with immigrant backgrounds (OECD, 2011). An examination of school language policies in Germany, England, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland reveals some common key characteristics. At the pre-primary level, very few countries provide systematic language support (although the Netherlands has an explicit curriculum in place). At the primary and lower secondary levels, the most common approach is defined as *immersion with systematic language support*. This requires students with immigrant backgrounds to study all standard academic subjects through regular classes in the national language (L2), while receiving targeted instruction to develop their L2 skills. Some countries offer *immersion programs with a preparatory phase in the language of instruction* for newly immigrated students. This program requires students to develop their language skills before they make the transition to regular classes. This is an approach which occurs more frequently at lower secondary education (OECD, 2003).

Approaches that invest more heavily in the students’ first languages (L1) are relatively uncommon. These include *bilingual language support* in both the L1 and the language of instruction (L2); for example, in England, Finland, and Norway,

immersion with systematic language support may include some bilingual components. *Transitional bilingual programs* with initial instruction in the first language of students and a gradual shift toward the language of instruction do not play an important role in any of the countries explored in PISA (OECD, 2003). A very few countries offer supplementary classes in schools to improve students' first languages; in Sweden, for example, students have the right to L1 education, and schools normally provide such classes if a sufficient number of students with the same first language live in the municipality. Schools in the Swiss Canton of Geneva also offer first language classes for the most common minority languages. In many countries, the provision of L1 instruction depends on the municipality or the individual schools. In other countries, arranging L1 instruction programs is left to families or community groups (OECD, 2003).

Within this overall picture, the specific measures that countries or subnational entities use vary widely, for instance regarding the existence of explicit curricula and standards, the focus of the support (e.g., curriculum vs. language development), and the organization of the support (e.g., within integrated classrooms, in separate classes, or as a specific school subject). Explicit curricula or curriculum framework documents for second language support exist in several countries, e.g., Denmark (for both immersion with systematic language support and immersion with a preparatory phase), some German *Länder*, Norway, and Sweden (for immersion with systematic language support), and Luxembourg (for immersion with a preparatory phase). The curricula vary considerably, in terms of content, level of specificity, and scope (OECD, 2003).

In countries that have well-established language support programs, with clearly defined objectives and standards, the performance gap between students with immigrant backgrounds and their native peers is lessened. A second consistent finding is that second-generation students of immigrant backgrounds perform at levels closer to those of native peers than do first-generation students. Unfortunately the available data do not allow us to determine the relative impact of different language support programs on these achievement levels (OECD, 2003).

Despite these limited positive indications, however, the language education provisions for students of immigrant backgrounds in general far fall short of what experts recommend (Siarova, 2013). In particular, according to a review conducted in 2013 by the SIRIUS European Policy Network, which focuses on the education of children and young people with a migrant background, the following problems are widespread:

- Lack of effective initial language assessment tests.
- Lack of continuous language support. In most countries the support usually ceases after 1–2 years of intensive instruction.
- Lack of structural and effective teacher training and of available teacher resources.
- Support to immigrant's mother tongue is very limited across Europe, and in many cases its provision is sporadic.

- Schools and education policies are not tolerant to language diversity. The list of available foreign language for learning is often limited to the most popular EU languages.
- In many countries schools do not receive necessary governmental support to organise immigrant children's education effectively. Even though additional funding (in terms of students' basket) is foreseen, professional and knowledge support is lacking.

As the SIRIUS report goes on to note, progress on these various issues is part and parcel of the broader movement for inclusive education: "change can happen only if all stakeholders are committed to actual inclusive education, where everybody's particularities are addressed and there are no majorities and minorities" (Siarova, 2013, p. 22). Professionalization and professional development are essential, as are the promotion and advocacy of multilingualism at the school level. In this regard, "it is important to always remind professionals and public that the demand for knowledge of two foreign languages is not limited to popular EU languages and that every child's mother language is equally important and valued" (p. 22).

As argued in the previous section, investments in and reform of teacher training constitute one essential strategy for improving this situation. Currently, there is very little in the traditions and processes of public schooling and teacher preparation that is compatible with a genuinely pluralistic approach to language education. Most teachers are not required to have competence in any language other than the language of instruction, let alone plurilingual competence. Students' linguistic repertoires apart from the standard language of instruction are commonly treated as educationally irrelevant, or even as barriers to learning. Few schools or school systems have consistent policies and processes based on linguistic diversity as an asset. The multilingual dimension of teacher education is generally limited to the preparation of foreign language teachers (generalist, as is most common in elementary schools, or specialist, as in the typical secondary school model); yet even here, diversity is strictly limited. The statistics on foreign language teaching in European schools demonstrate that the curriculum is dominated by just five languages: English, French, Spanish, German and Russian (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency [EACEA], 2012); thus most multilingual teacher training focuses on the teaching of this handful of languages.

In recent years, specialists in multilingualism associated with the Council of Europe have argued for the development of more inclusive models of language education and multilingual teacher training (e.g., Beacco & Byram, 2007; Beacco et al., 2010; Candelier, de Pietro, Facciol, Lőrincz, Pascual, & Schröder-Sura, 2012). However, the existing reports in this area tend to focus on the *goals* of teacher education without giving serious attention to the practical challenges involved. The following passage from the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* conveys the general tone (Beacco et al., 2010, p. 39):

The implementation and success of any curriculum depends on teachers, and the ways in which a plurilingual and intercultural curriculum modifies their role must be considered. The very fact that it requires them to shed old teaching habits makes



it essential that they should accept it. They also need to be convinced that intercultural education itself is useful, since the only ability it tries to develop is not a native one. They must be made to feel that they are helping, together, to develop their pupils' plurilingual repertoire. ....

The same authors summarize “some of the new types of expertise required of teachers involved in plurilingual and intercultural education,” including knowledge of bilingualism/plurilingualism, managing transfer of skills from one language to another, setting realistic targets for intercultural competence, etc. And they “anticipate resistance,” calling for “training strategies which lead teachers to see their role differently, transcend subject boundaries and all work together.” Finally they conclude: “This is a complex issue, and specialised psycho-social research is needed to process it.” (Beacco et al., 2010).

Perhaps it is unnecessary to dwell on the failings of such prescriptions as a tool for changing policy and practice in mainstream teacher education. However sound and intelligent the perceptions of need may be, they will not be taken up by teachers and teacher educators unless they can be integrated with a broader agenda, such as the transformation of teacher preparation and teacher development practices that the inclusion movement is calling for (EADSNE, 2011, 2012; OECD, 2010). Such an integration calls for shifts on both sides. On the one hand, the developing literature on teacher education for inclusion rarely foregrounds the issue of linguistic diversity in schools; on the other, documents such as the *Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures* (Candelier et al., 2012) display little awareness of the broader inclusion movement. It is clearly time that researchers and advocates for inclusion and researchers and advocates for multilingual education come together to forge a common agenda.

## 5 Challenges for SLA and LP Research

Such a common agenda would have implications for researchers in both language policy and language acquisition. To date the research literature in both fields has been heavily influenced by dominant ideologies and systems of language management, including the monolingual bias of schools (May, 2014). This is no doubt an obvious point to advocates for mother-tongue education, including those from the many regional languages and language varieties indigenous to Europe as well as those speaking on behalf of migrant language communities. But we wish to make a more general point: that research agendas across the board will be impacted by a more consistent focus on inclusion. To the extent that inclusion succeeds in progressing beyond political declarations to become a structuring principle in education systems, such a shift is needed in order for SLA and LP research to remain relevant (or to regain relevance) to the changing social and political landscape.

To illustrate this idea, we turn to the history of SLA research, broadly defined. The teaching and learning of languages not used in the home (and hence categorized as “second” or additional languages) is a central feature of inclusive education – but

have scholars in this field addressed its central questions from this perspective? In a comprehensive literature review, Dixon et al. (2012) identified “four groups who have contributed to research on issues of L2 learning and teaching: foreign language educators, child language researchers, sociocultural researchers, and psycholinguists” (p. 6). As they note, these groups have largely worked with different populations, employed different methods and interpretative frameworks, and published their findings in different sets of journals. As a consequence, it is a relatively complex task to uncover what “the literature” has to say about optimal settings and conditions for language learning.

Dixon et al. (2012) first asked, what does the literature tell us about the optimal conditions for L2 acquisition? Tellingly, it turned out to have more to say on the influence of home and community environments than about the social environment of the school. In the US context, the reviewers found some research on the effectiveness of so-called two-way bilingual programs, which typically consist of equal proportions of native speakers of English and Spanish, each learning the other’s language. There was also some evidence for the positive effects of “well-implemented specialized instruction for L2 learners” (p. 38). These are meagre findings, however, when one considers the broader implications of inclusion for the design of language programs, and indeed the term “inclusion” is notable for its absence from the literature on L2 learning conditions.

Dixon et al. (2012) went on to ask what the literature can tell us about the characteristics of successful L2 learners, finding an emphasis on traits such as aptitude and motivation, and the possible role of additional factors such as “L2 anxiety.” These concepts are somewhat problematic when viewed through an inclusion lens, since motivation and anxiety, along with self-concept and self-efficacy, tend to be highly context-dependent. In other words, language acquisition research conducted with inclusion in mind needs to be attentive to students’ overall perceptions of their acceptance and agency in the classroom context – a perspective that seems to be largely missing from the existing literature.

Dixon et al.’s (2012) third question concerned the characteristics of successful L2 teachers. They found the research literature to focus largely on teachers’ proficiency in the target language, and to some extent on their proficiency in the students’ L1. As might be expected, there was also some indication that teacher self-efficacy and skills in classroom management could have a positive effect. If we compare these findings to the lists of dispositions, competences and skills in the inclusion literature, reviewed above, we must conclude that the scope of the LS teaching literature is relatively narrow.

The fourth question addressed by Dixon et al. (2012) was, “What are reasonable expectations for speed and accomplishment for L2 learners of different ages?” The clearest finding they uncovered in the literature was that “younger is not better” – older L2 learners perform better on all tests of proficiency, although for all ages the amount of input (e.g., total hours of instruction, or time spent with native speakers of the target language) is a critical variable, as is the distance (in vocabulary, grammar, modes of use) between learners’ L1 and the L2. One might take this as pointing to the great importance of designing L2 learning environments, but as noted above,

little research has tried to trace connections between success in L2 learning and the contexts provided to support such learning.

What is apparent, then, in reviewing the frameworks and methods of this considerable literature, is the dominance of quite restricted conceptions of both learning and teaching. The holistic understanding of learner and teacher identity, of school and community contexts, found in the *Index for Inclusion* and the *Profile of Inclusive Teachers* is notable for its absence in the literature represented in Dixon et al.'s review. As a consequence, the body of knowledge represented by this wealth of studies is of uncertain relevance to the issues currently faced by schools, teachers, and teacher educators. Linguistic aspects of inclusion do involve specialized knowledge – that seems undeniable. What is less clear is how that knowledge can be developed so that it speaks to the realities of diversity – to the complexities of culture, identity, relationship and power as they unfold in schools and communities.

It is worth noting in passing that similar criticisms have been levelled at the literature on informal (“uninstructed”) second language acquisition. According to Young-Scholten (2013), the 1970s and early 1980s saw the development of “a radical new line of research whose focus was on the most disadvantaged of all L2 learners: working class adult immigrants past the age of compulsory schooling” (p. 442). Soon, however, this population ceased to hold any particular interest for researchers, as developments in theory and funding priorities prompted a shift to more accessible and easy-to-work with populations. Young-Scholten (2013) argues, as we are arguing here, that “socially relevant” research on language acquisition requires a rethinking of the settings, participants, and questions central to SLA research. She suggests that “generative SLA researchers,” whom we might view as more or less equivalent to the “psycholinguists” identified in Dixon et al.'s review, might learn from their colleagues working in the sociocultural paradigm, and get used to “more cooperation with the wider community” as a central aspect of their research praxis.

This may be a place to begin. What would language acquisition research look like, if it included teachers from highly multilingual settings and representatives of diverse migrant groups and organizations? It might indeed be concerned with questions similar to those posed by Dixon et al. (2012), i.e., with defining the conditions in which language learning can proceed as quickly and effectively as possible; but it would begin from different premises. Language learning would be seen as a multi-level endeavour, just as inclusive teaching is regarded as a multi-level endeavour (OECD, 2005). Individual processes of language acquisition take place within a classroom context, a school context, and a community and social context, all of which may yield relevant data for interpreting particular outcomes. Researchers would need to invest significant time in characterizing these contexts, building relationships with teachers and students and parents while they did so. As Young-Scholten (2013) suggests, this would not necessarily require researchers to adopt a sociocultural analytical framework – it would still be legitimate to inquire into purely linguistic features such as the development of vocabulary and grammatical competence – but the research would be explicitly situated in realistic settings that teachers, parents and students could recognize.

Such research would have a much greater chance of engaging and shaping teachers' understanding of what is possible and desirable. Teachers do not work, by and large, with abstractions. They encounter their classrooms and their students as messy, imperfectly knowable, and resistant to improvement. Linguistic inclusion is only one aspect of their job, and not something to which they can devote huge amounts of time and energy. What they need is not idealized prescriptions but strategies and models that can be integrated into their overall teaching practice. Working within an inclusion framework, this means strategies and models that deliberately acknowledge and include students' L1 competence alongside their developing L2 competence, and that treat these competences as an integral part of students' developing bicultural or multicultural identities.

An important aspect of this research agenda, and one barely explored to date, is the question of how to effectively prepare teachers to understand and employ such strategies and models. This issue calls for action research with teachers in classrooms, but also for systematic research in postsecondary teacher education. As we noted earlier, a research program on inclusive teacher education has slowly been unfolding, both at the European level and internationally, but it has yet to engage seriously with issues of linguistic inclusion. In the same way that inclusion itself cannot be taught effectively in the form of a single specialized course, so too we might suspect that the "plurilingual and intercultural" competence called for by Beacco et al. (2010) needs to be infused throughout a teacher education program in order to have a lasting impact on teachers' subsequent practice. Long-term research collaborations between language acquisition specialists and teacher educators, on the basis of a shared philosophy and framework for inclusive education, may offer the most promising way forward (EASDNE, 2012).

Such collaborations, of course, may in turn imply changes to the structures and processes of the departments and schools of education that host them. Such is the conclusion of Tony Booth, whose *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) has been one of the most influential tools for moving schools towards more inclusive practices. According to Booth (2011), "inclusion within a school is as much about the school as an institution, its cultures and organization and the relationships it encourages, as about what happens in lessons" (p. 306). Following this line of reasoning further, in developing inclusive teacher education it is important that we aspire to our higher education institutions "becoming models of democratic participation, embodying inclusive leadership and non-violent forms of communication as well as inclusive approaches to teaching and research" (pp. 306–307). Such provisions will enable our student teachers to "learn from what we do and what we say as well as from the congruence, or lack of it, between these" (p. 307).

In other words, the effective inclusion of learners from different linguistic backgrounds requires that schools, universities, and the broader society be genuinely committed to inclusion as a core value, not just as a set of ad hoc adaptations to external circumstances. Language acquisition researchers are a part of this reality, not separate from it, and this must inevitably come to influence the research methods and interpretative frameworks that govern the field. It is even conceivable that

such developments may come to redirect the search for universal models of language acquisition towards more context- and culture-bound approaches that have a genuine impact on policy and practice.

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# Language Development in Bilingual Children: Fact, Factoid and Fiction



Virginia Mueller Gathercole

**Abstract** This chapter examines a range of factors that shape the development of language in bilingual children. Evidence-based practice in education, speech and language therapy, and language policy needs to be based on a thorough understanding of how these factors work together to determine the patterns of development and use of language observed in bilingual children and adults.

**Keywords** Bilinguals · Bilingual Language Development · Input · Exposure

## 1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in bridging gaps between research on language use and development in bilinguals, on the one hand, and practices in education, speech and language therapy, and language policy, on the other. We have gained considerable insights, but there can often be a confusing mix of messages emanating from this work, leading to uncertainty concerning the best applications of research in practice. The purpose of this chapter is to examine this wide-ranging field and separate fact from fiction, and the full facts from factoids (“brief or trivial item[s] of news or information,” Oxford English Dictionary) that may provide a glimpse into reality but cloud the full picture because of a failure to provide a comprehensive account. The following are real-life examples of situations that have resulted in adverse consequences for bilingual children, largely due to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, or misplaced good will.

**Anecdote 1** In a preschool in North Wales, where the Welsh language is thriving and is spoken alongside English by approximately 65% of the population (UK census 2011, <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/WelshSpeakers-by-LocalAuthority-Gender-DetailedAgeGroups-2011Census>), a

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teacher was trying to encourage children to read. She told the children that if anyone could learn to read a book at home, s/he could bring the book in and read it to the class. “Ian” one day proudly brought in such a book. But instead of letting Ian read it to the class, the teacher simply put the book on a shelf, where it stayed the rest of the day. The problem was that the book was in English. The teacher was committed to supporting, not only the children’s burgeoning reading skills, but also their use of the Welsh language. She apparently felt that bringing English reading into the classroom would have negative consequences for learning to read in Welsh. Evidence on this matter, however, shows quite the contrary, with positive carry-over effects, especially for reading, between a bilingual child’s two languages (Oller & Eilers, 2002a; Oller & Pearson, 2002).

**Anecdote 2** The “Dulang” family lived in a “monolingual” English city in the UK. The mother (born in the UK), grew up speaking English and “Dulangish”; the father also spoke both English and Dulangish. The family had 2 daughters, aged 10 and 7, whom they had adopted as infants. The girls were being brought up in and were fully fluent in both English and Dulangish.

The family were delighted when Social Services asked whether they would like to adopt the 20-month-old half brother of one of the girls. But Social Services soon began to withdraw the opportunity, because they discovered that the family would be speaking both languages to the child, and they did not want the child to learn Dulangish alongside English. They feared that he would “lose” his English and argued that Dulangish did not reflect “his heritage.” A further wrinkle was that the child appeared to have delayed speech, so Social Services were worried that two languages would impede his progress. We will see below that these fears were unfounded.

**Anecdote 3** In South Florida, there are several effective bilingual Head Start programs designed to serve the children of migrant workers, who mainly come from Mexico and Central America. The bilingual staff are creative and dedicated; their goal, in relation to language, is to help move the children towards the use of English while retaining their use of Spanish. On a visit to one classroom, it was noted that written materials posted all over the room were mostly in English. When asked about this, one teacher asserted that the children saw about 50% Spanish and pointed to a work station containing flashcards with words in Spanish or English. These cards provided only a minimal presence of written Spanish, in comparison with the overwhelming presence of written English in the classroom. We will see below that the level of exposure to a language is critical for its acquisition.

**Anecdote 4** At a recent conference, one Miami public school teacher lamented the fact that, despite the fact that she had been teaching Kindergarten for over 25 years, she still had to argue with the school principal that children with limited English proficiency do not have developmental problems and do not need special education classes. The principal’s apparent assumption that bilingual children have difficulties with learning per se has no foundation in fact. Bilingual children show equivalent or

even superior academic achievement in comparison with their socioeconomically-matched peers (e.g., Cenoz, Arozena, & Gorter, 2013; Oller & Pearson, 2002).

These anecdotes reveal some common misunderstandings:

- (a) There is a failure to recognize that children have an incredible facility to learn two languages at the same time. Learning one language will not detract from learning another, whether it is learning to read or learning to speak.
- (b) There is sometimes a suspicion that bilingual children are “at risk” for academic achievement just because they are bilingual. The automatic placement of children with limited English proficiency into a class of children with developmental disorders is symptomatic of such a suspicion, and movements that have insisted on the use of one language in the classroom at the cost of excluding others have been counter-productive for the success of bilingual children in academic settings (e.g., Caldas, 2013). Bilingual children entering school score low on entrance measures, not because of developmental difficulties, but because they have had limited exposure to the language of the tests, English.
- (c) There is a lack of appreciation of the range of factors that contribute to patterns of development in bilingual (and monolingual) children. One key factor is that exposure is critical. Children will not learn a language if they do not hear it; children will not learn to read a language if they do not see it written.

To gain a better understanding of language development in bilingual children, and, in the end, help foster more informed decisions with regard to real-life situations and policies, it is instructive to reflect on the range of factors influencing development. Some of these affect all children, both monolingual and bilingual, and some are particular to bilingual children. Keeping these factors in mind will promote informed decision-making and the development of evidence-based practice.

## 2 Factors that Contribute to Language Development in Monolinguals and Bilinguals

The following first presents factors affecting development in all children, and then the focus turns to those affecting bilinguals in particular.

### 2.1 *Factors Affecting both Monolingual and Bilingual Children*

#### *Quantity of Input and Exposure*

Exposure is a crucial determinant of what a child learns when.

**Exposure in the Home** The home is where young children have their first experiences with language. In Hart and Risley’s (1995, 2003) ground-breaking study of language learning by monolingual children from distinct socioeconomic levels,

these authors discovered significant differences in language input across families—differences that had drastic consequences for the children’s uptake of language. Children growing up in families on welfare heard about 616 words per hour, those from working class families 1251 words per hour, and those from professional families 2153 words per hour; thus, welfare children heard fewer than one third as many words as children from professional households. This difference had a profound effect on the number of words known by the children: by age 3, the children of professional parents knew twice as many words as the children in welfare families, and differences grew as the children got older.

For children growing up with two (or more) languages, exposure is split between the languages. Differences from one child to another in the amount of exposure can have the natural consequence of influencing the timing of acquisition (Cobo-Lewis, Pearson, Eilers, & Umbel, 2002a, 2002b; Cohen, 2006; Gathercole & Hoff, 2007; Hoff, Core, Place, Rumiche, Señor, & Parra, 2012; Kupisch, 2003; Oller & Eilers, 2002b; Pearson & Fernández, 1994; Pearson, Fernández, & Oller, 1993, 1995; Place & Hoff, 2011; Rieckborn, 2006; Unsworth, 2016). Those who hear more input in each language generally have earlier vocabularies and an earlier command of some grammatical constructs in that language than those with less. Some clear examples come from studies in Miami (Cobo-Lewis, Pearson, Eilers, & Umbel, 2002a, 2002b; Oller & Eilers, 2002b) and in Wales (Gathercole, Thomas, & Hughes, 2008; Gathercole, Thomas, Roberts, Hughes, & Hughes, 2013). In Miami, children who grow up in Spanish-only homes have the advantage in Spanish, those who grow up in Spanish-and-English homes have the advantage in English; in Wales, bilingual children who grow up in Welsh-only homes have the early advantage in Welsh, and those who grow up in English-only homes have the early advantage in English.

It is important to note that these early differences across bilinguals, unlike the differences observed for children from different socioeconomic backgrounds, tend to become neutralized with time: Those who are initially behind in one or the other of their languages generally “catch up” with those who showed an earlier head start (Gathercole & Thomas, 2009; Oller & Eilers, 2002a). As children gain a “critical mass” of input in the linguistic constructs of interest, early differences across groups disappear (Gathercole, 2002).

Input patterns in the home can change dramatically over time, however, according to the context in which the bilingual child finds him/herself. One recent study (Jia, Chen, Kim, Chan, & Jeung, 2014) reported on input in the heritage language in the case of Chinese/Korean-English bilingual children growing up in the US. The proportional use of the heritage language with parents and siblings decreased with age: with parents, from 90% to 70%, with siblings, from 60% or 70% to 20%. Bridges, and Hoff (2014) similarly found changes in the home language in bilingual families in South Florida. As older siblings entered school, they began acting as significant sources of English for their younger siblings, and even the mother’s use of English increased dramatically. Stadthagen-González, Gathercole, Pérez-Tattam, and Yavas (2013) reported on similar changes in the proportion of input in the two languages as bilinguals got older in South Florida, with ever-increasing input favoring English.

These patterns of input and changes in input correlate with performance on language tasks in each of the bilingual's two languages. In Jia et al.'s (2014) study, children's performance on a picture naming and a lexical fluency task was higher on English than on the heritage language at every age, and the gap between English and the heritage language widened. In Ribot and Hoff's (2014) study, children's language choice in code-switched utterances correlated highly with exposure to the language and lexical proficiency in it. Bridges and Hoff (2014) reported similar findings for children's performance on vocabulary, grammatical complexity, and mean length of longest utterance.

Such changes with time in the home language input are not observed in all contexts and cultures, however. In Wales, for example, we found that there was minimal change in the proportion of Welsh versus English used by parents to children (Gathercole & Thomas, 2007, pp. 147–148, Figs. 4.5, 4.6). If parents began speaking mostly Welsh to children when they were young, they continued to speak mostly Welsh to children at older ages. The differences across the communities appears to be related to various factors, including the relative prestige of the two languages in the community, commitment by speakers to the survival of one or other language, the status of the languages as immigrant or indigenous languages, and opportunities related to proficiency in one or the other (or both) of the languages. In the case of Wales, one critical factor was also which language(s) the parents' own parents spoke to them as children (Gathercole & Thomas, 2007, Figs 4.2 to 4.6).

**Exposure in the Community and Beyond** Exposure outside the home is also important (Gathercole & Thomas, 2005, 2009; Jia et al., 2014; Wong-Fillmore, 2000). Whereas a common fear of laymen is that bilingual children, especially immigrant children, do not learn the language of the community, and whereas there are many factors influencing language dominance in bilinguals (Silva-Corvalán & Treffers-Daller, 2015), there is ample evidence that in fact the language of the community tends to become the dominant language of bilinguals. Children coming from distinct home language profiles eventually achieve parity in the dominant language (Flege, MacKay, & Piske, 2002; Gathercole & Thomas, 2009; Kupisch, Barton, Klaschik, Lein, Stangen, & van de Weijer, 2014), which can “win out” both in terms of the relative proportion of input experienced and in terms of the child's own output (Wong-Fillmore, 2000). The minority language, less prevalent in the community, in contrast, is often at threat for survival – both in the individual and in the community at large (Gathercole & Thomas, 2009).

The relative use of the minority language in the community can matter, however. In Wales, for example, continual development of the Welsh language in the teenage years, especially for those children from homes in which only English is spoken, depends crucially on the presence of Welsh in the community. Thomas, Gathercole, and Hughes (2013) found that vocabulary knowledge in those teenagers who were living where 65% or more of the community spoke Welsh continued to improve with age, whereas those in communities with less than 65% Welsh speakers remained flat. Similarly, heritage-language-learning children who visit the land of the mother tongue have better achievement in the language than those who do not (Kupisch et al. 2014).

**Language Use with Friends** The language spoken with friends in childhood is also influential. In Miami, English predominates in friend-to-friend exchanges (Stadthagen-González et al., 2013) even if Spanish dominates in the family, and even among early immigrants; this may play a role in the documented eventual parity in English across groups. In Wales (Gathercole & Thomas, 2007), adults' current abilities in Welsh and English, as judged by self-reports, correlated most highly with the language(s) they spoke with friends as children.

The above factors all contribute to the patterns of exposure to the bilingual's two languages and ultimate acquisition. One caveat is that such evidence should not be taken as evidence that the child him- or herself has limited resources for learning language that might make learning more than one language difficult. Rather, it is simply that a child must experience a language in context in order to learn it.

## 2.2 *Quality of Input*

Beyond quantity of exposure, it matters who the input is from. Children learn language in context (Gathercole, 2007a, 2007b) and are highly skilled at discovering patterns in the language they are hearing (Jusczyk, 1999; Mattys & Jusczyk, 2001; Saffran, Aslin, & Newport, 1996a, 1996b; Werker, Yeung, & Yoshida, 2012). Those patterns may differ in the speech of distinct adult speakers, so what the child can extract will differ accordingly. For example, Place and Hoff (2011) reported that children who heard native speakers of English in South Florida performed better on English than those who heard English from others. In a study on babies' processing of phonetic contrasts in their native language, Fennell and Byers-Heinlein (2014) found that perceptions were tied to the input infants were receiving: bilingual babies could discriminate phonetic contrasts when spoken by bilingual adults (and not monolingual adults), but monolingual babies could only discriminate contrasts when spoken by monolingual adults (not bilingual adults). These studies indicate that quantity of exposure alone is insufficient to explain patterns of acquisition in bilinguals; the nature of that exposure is an important factor.

## 2.3 *Individual Differences*

In addition to quantity and quality of input, the child's own motivations may affect their language development. The social and affective dynamics that are at play in the child's uptake of the two languages can involve multiple factors, including the child's desire for group membership (in either group) and for integration into and acceptance by friends (Snow & Hakuta, 1992; Oller, Jarmulowicz, Pearson, & Cobo-Lewis, 2011), as well as the child's perception of his/her own skills and enjoyment of the languages in question (Jean & Geva, 2012).

## 2.4 Socioeconomic Status

One extremely important factor to keep in mind is socioeconomic status. It is important because comparisons made between monolinguals and bilinguals often overlook SES differences that may be responsible for disparities between the groups. If a bilingual and monolingual group come from distinct SES backgrounds, it is not valid to automatically assume that differences between them should be attributed to bilingualism. A recent headline in the Washington Post (April 2, 2016) stated, “Latino children’s language skills are lagging by age 2, study says.” The article reports that “Nine-month-old Latino babies have the same language and cognitive abilities as their white peers, but by the time they reach age 2, they lag significantly behind, according to new research from the University of California at Berkeley.” On first blush, the impression is that bilingualism is the culprit in impeding progress in the Latino children. But the Post article itself adds that the researchers found that the differences in the groups were “linked in part to immigrant mothers’ weaker education.” In fact, on close examination of the study (Fuller, Bein, Kim, & Rabe-Hesketh, 2015), it becomes clear that the researchers attribute the differences they found in children’s expressive and receptive vocabularies, memories, concept attainment, and rudimentary problem-solving skills primarily to class differences, particularly mothers’ educational backgrounds and parenting practices.

The effects of socioeconomic status on the development and performance of children, from the earliest years through the school years and beyond, are well documented. The Hart and Risley (1995) study mentioned above, involving crucial differences in vocabulary input and acquisition, is a case in point. Other similar studies abound: e.g., Raviv, Kessenich, and Morrison (2004) found that SES significantly correlated with 3-year-olds’ productive and receptive vocabularies, as well as their basic concepts of quantity, comparisons, shapes, colors, and letters. In another study, Hoff (2003) examined mid-SES and working class mothers’ speech to their 2-year-old children at two time points separated by 10 weeks. The vocabularies of the children in the two SES groups were comparable at time 1, but the mid-SES children’s vocabularies grew significantly more by time 2 than the working class children’s.

In Oller and Eiler’s (2002b) study of bilinguals in Miami, high SES children had the early advantage for English, but for Spanish, low SES children in two-way schools or from homes in which only Spanish was spoken had the early advantage. Gatt & O’Toole 2013; Gatt, O’Toole, & Haman, 2015 examined parent-report measures of vocabulary performance of bilingual infants from 7 language pairs and found a significant correlation between the fathers’ educational levels and children’s total vocabulary scores across their two languages. Chiat, Armon-Lotem, Marinis, Poliřenská, Roy and Seeff-Gabriel (2013) tested L2 bilingual children on sentence-repetition tasks. SES mattered: For Russian-German bilinguals’ performance on German, 17% of high SES bilinguals performed more than one standard deviation below the mean, but fully 41% of low SES bilinguals fell into that category; for low SES English monolinguals and Turkish-English bilinguals’ performance on English, 13% of the monolinguals and 18% of the bilinguals fell between 1 to 2 standard



deviations below the mean; however, yet another 70% of low SES bilinguals fell more than 2 standard deviations below the mean. In another study, Calvo and Bialystok (2014) examined the separate effects of SES level and bilingualism on the performance of middle class and working class 6- to 7-year-old children in Toronto on a range of cognitive, linguistic, and executive function tasks. Lower SES served to delay progress in both language and executive function development. In a further study, Gathercole, Kennedy, and Thomas (2016) examined the influences of relative age, home language, and SES on performance by Welsh-English bilinguals and monolinguals aged 4 through over 60 on receptive vocabulary tests in English and in Welsh, as well as for a number of other skills. The findings showed that home language and SES level were both highly predictive of performance on language at nearly every age. For English, SES appeared to play a more predictive role at the higher ages than origin home language.

Thus, it is important to separate effects of SES from effects of bilingualism. When studies involve bilinguals and monolinguals who are from distinct cultural backgrounds, or even immigrant vs. non-immigrant populations, it is essential to investigate the possibility that observed effects might stem, at least in part, from SES differences.

## ***2.5 Factors that Contribute for Bilingual Children Only***

A number of additional influences on performance are particular to the language-learning situation in bilinguals.

### **2.5.1 Distribution of Exposure/Complementarity Principle**

The contexts in which a bilingual child hears the two languages are not isomorphic—they may overlap to some extent, but there are likely to be some contexts that favor one or the other language. Because of this, the child may know how to say some things in one language and other things in the other. For example, the child may know scientific terms in one language, but know sports terms in the other, depending on which language(s) s/he experiences in each of those contexts. Such a “distributed characteristic” or “complementarity” (Grosjean, 2001; Oller, 2005; Oller & Pearson, 2002; Patterson & Pearson, 2004) can persist into adulthood, so that, e.g., academic language may come easily in one language and not in the other. The distributed characteristic is highly relevant to assessments of bilinguals, especially measures that focus on or rely on vocabulary knowledge; researchers have argued that bilingual children need to be assessed in both of their languages for a full account of their knowledge or abilities (see, e.g., Armon-Lotem, de Jong, & Meir, 2015; Gatt et al., 2015; Letts, 2013; O’Toole, 2013; Pearson et al., 1993; Peña, Bedore, & Fiestas 2013).

Oller, Pearson, and Cobo-Lewis (2007) argue that this distributed characteristic of vocabulary knowledge can spill over to grammatical knowledge and lead to differential performance, or “profile effects.” For grammatical structures that pertain to

particular vocabulary items, lower vocabulary knowledge may result in lower performance on those grammatical forms; for structures that rely less on knowledge of particular vocabulary items (e.g., metalinguistic awareness), performance will excel once the child has gained the knowledge in question, regardless of vocabulary knowledge. Paradis and Kirova (2014) consider profile effects in bilinguals' acquisition of narrative abilities in English. They argue that some skills (e.g., how to express first mentions – “A boy appeared at the door...,” not “The boy appeared at the door...”) are more dependent on knowledge of the specific language than others (e.g., how to structure a story). The latter type are more “language neutral,” and, therefore, less prone to profile effects.

Profile effects are a reminder that bilingual children's abilities are not “all or none,” but, instead, differ from case to case, depending on what particular aspect of the language one is examining.

### 2.5.2 Relations Between the Two Languages

One obvious, but critical, way in which a bilingual differs from a monolingual is that s/he knows two languages. While there is considerable evidence that simultaneous and early bilinguals' linguistic systems, particularly at the morpho-syntactic level, develop separately from very early on (Meisel, 1989, 2001; see Quay & Montanari, 2016), there is also ample evidence that the two systems are linked – e.g., crosslinguistic priming studies show that forms from one language call up related forms in the speaker's other language (Dijkstra & van Hell, 2003; Dijkstra & Van Heuven, 1998; Grosjean, 1998, 2001; Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2002).

There is considerable debate on the important question of the level of interaction between the two languages – where they might interact, under what conditions, and in what type of bilinguals (Gathercole, Pérez-Tattam, Stadthagen-González, & Thomas, 2014; Hulk & Müller, 2000; Sorace, 2003; Tsimpli & Sorace, 2006; White, 2009). Gathercole (2016) suggests two places where linkages are readily apparent: (a) situations in which the two languages share surface phonological shapes and (b) cross-language convergence in semantic organization. When there are shared phonological shapes – cognates and near-cognates – children may be able to take advantage of the similarities. Bosch and Ramon-Casas (2014) examined the vocabularies of monolingual and bilingual 18-month-old infants exposed to Catalan and/or Spanish, and they concluded that phonological proximity of words across the bilinguals' two languages can facilitate lexical acquisition: bilinguals' vocabulary scores met or exceeded those of monolinguals. Schelletter (2002) reports a similar advantage in the acquisition of words sharing phonological form in a very young German-English bilingual child.

With older bilinguals, the evidence is more mixed. García (1991) reported that fourth-grade Spanish/English bilinguals seldom took advantage of cross-language cognates while reading, suggesting instead that a certain level of development and possibly explicit instruction in the use of cognates was needed for bilinguals to adopt this strategy. On the other hand, Nagy, García, Durgunoğlu, and Hancin-Bhatt (1993) found that first-language vocabulary knowledge and ability to recognize

cognates affected performance of children in fourth to sixth grades in a comprehension task that included cognates. Kelley and Kohnert (2012) similarly found a cognate advantage in 8- to 13-year-old L1 Spanish learners of English as an L2, although they reported considerable individual variation. Méndez Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010) looked into vocabulary knowledge of Kindergarten and first-grade Spanish-English bilingual children and found that those who were dominant in Spanish performed better with cognates than with non-cognates, while those who were dominant in English performed better with non-cognates. For adults, Stadthagen-González et al.'s (2013) found that Spanish-English fluent bilinguals showed better performance (10–12% higher) on cognates and near-cognates than on non-cognates.

It is possible that bilinguals are able to capitalize on surface phonological similarities in their two languages in different ways at different points in development. In infants, when children are first learning the mappings between individual words and referents, the recurrence of the same form in the input from the two languages in reference to the same extension may support the retention and recall of those forms. In older children, as words become more entrenched in their linguistic and non-linguistic contexts of usage in each language, the linkages between the individual forms may be somewhat weaker. Then as bilinguals gain full fluency in the two languages, the links across languages may be strengthened through usage of the two languages in more and more similar contexts.

With regard to semantic knowledge, or meaning associated with language, there is similar evidence that the two systems of bilinguals can influence each other. This is true for L2 learners (with influence both from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1) (Brown & Gullberg, 2008; Elston-Güttler & Williams, 2008; Jiang, 2002, 2004; Malt & Sloman, 2003; Pavlenko, 2003; Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2002; Pavlenko & Malt, 2011; Wolff & Ventura, 2009), and for simultaneous and early sequential bilinguals (Ameel, Malt, Storms, & van Assche, 2009; Ameel, Storms, Malt, & Sloman, 2005; Gathercole & Moawad, 2010). For example, Ameel and colleagues have found that simultaneous Dutch-French bilinguals show convergence of categories of bottles and dishes across their two languages: e.g., whereas a comparison of Dutch and French monolinguals showed only a 63% correlation in their groupings for the naming of bottles in the two languages, Dutch-French bilinguals showed an 88% correlation, indicating that the categorizations of the two languages were influencing each other.

Such evidence will have natural consequences for bilinguals' performance related to the linguistic encoding of such categories and concepts. What may LOOK like a lack of knowledge or a lack of conceptual understanding may be a simple consequence of the interaction of the speaker's two languages within the semantic-conceptual domain. Thus, e.g., a Welsh-dominant bilingual child, when asked in English, might assert, drawing on the Welsh contrast between *bryn* 'hill/mini-mountain' and (*g*)*allt* 'hill/incline,' that an incline in the road is not a "hill"; or she might claim, on the basis of the Welsh word *chwyrnu* 'growl, snore', that her sleeping father is "growling"; conversely, an English-dominant bilingual child might assert in Welsh that an incline in the road is a "bryn" or might deny that her sleeping father can "chwyrnu."

Such phonological and semantic cases of “communication” between the bilingual’s two languages, and any others in which bilinguals’ two languages influence each other, constitute one of the primary realms in which a bilingual’s knowledge and organization of his/her two languages will necessarily differ from the knowledge and organization in corresponding monolinguals.

### **3 Implications: Factors to Keep in Mind When Evaluating Bilingual Children’s Progress**

We can sum up the implications of the above factors, taken together, as follows:

#### ***3.1 Expected Differences Across Groups***

First, we can expect bilinguals to be different from monolinguals, and we can expect subtle differences in bilinguals relative to each other according to differences in early exposure in the home. At the early stages especially, there is likely to be a difference in the timing of development (but not usually sequence of development (Gathercole, 2007b; Håkansson, Salameh, & Nettelbladt, 2003; Kupisch, 2003; Rieckborn, 2006)), in accordance with the level of exposure to the language in question.

Differences will also be seen in knowledge of language in distinct contexts and in semantic understanding, and we can expect to see phenomena (e.g., cross-language priming) associated with a bilingual’s constant access (overt or covert) to his/her other language.

Sometimes, of course, the bilingual child may show superior performance over the monolingual – e.g., on cognates in the two languages, in metalinguistic awareness, or in some cognitive tasks such as those probing executive function (e.g., Bialystok, 2011; Kroll & Bialystok, 2013; but see Paap, Johnson, & Sawi, 2015).

#### ***3.2 Neutralization of Differences with Time***

Despite initial differences, we can expect that, as long as there is continued exposure to each language, bilingual children with different patterns of exposure will eventually gain general parity across groups, and with monolinguals. This is particularly true of the dominant language in the community, but also applies to the minority language if exposure (especially to native speakers) is maintained.

Nevertheless, there may be some structures for which the bilingual child shows imperfect learning. This is most likely to occur in cases of limited exposure, late age of acquisition, transfer effects from a more dominant to a less dominant language

(Montrul et al. 2008), and in relation to minority language structures that are highly complex (e.g., grammatical gender in Welsh, Gathercole, Thomas, & Laporte, 2001).

### ***3.3 Variations According to Source***

We can expect effects in bilinguals in relation to who the source of the input is. The variants of the language that the bilingual child is exposed to will affect the ultimate form that the system will take.

### ***3.4 The Importance of Other Factors***

We must keep in mind especially the SES level of the child in question. We cannot overlook critical differences on this variable; we now have a better understanding that SES can help enhance or impede developments in language.

### ***3.5 High Performance in the Community Language***

In cases of bilingual communities in which one of the two languages is dominant, we can expect bilingual children (as long as the linguistic groups are not isolated from one another) to gain relatively complete acquisition of that dominant language; the minority language, in contrast, may suffer from less comprehensive exposure (Gathercole & Thomas, 2009).

### ***3.6 Need to Examine Both Languages***

Because the observed factors affect acquisition of both languages of a bilingual, we need to assess bilinguals' performance in both languages for a full account of their knowledge and abilities. Much recent research aims to find ways of accomplishing such dual-language testing (see, e.g., chapters in Armon-Lotem et al., 2015; Gathercole 2013a, 2013b).

## **4 Conclusion: Fact, Factoid, Fiction**

Let us return to to the facts, factoids, and fiction about bilingual language.

**Factoids** Each of the contributing factors in isolation can be taken as a “factoid” – a small piece of information that gives an ever-so-small glimpse into the reality of language development and use in bilingual children. In itself, each factoid may be true. But it is a limited truth; it by itself in isolation gives a skewed picture.

**Fiction** The greatest fiction would be assuming that any one factoid was enough to draw inferences about best practice. Taken in isolation, each piece may be valid, but if one were to build whole models of language development in bilinguals or of best practice based on a single factoid, then this would overlook crucial influences.

**Fact** The greatest fact is that all of these factors contribute together to patterns of development. It is only by understanding how all of them interact that we can come up with effective policies. Ultimately, every bilingual child (and every monolingual child!) is different from every other. The confluence of all of the above factors makes each child and each child’s experience unique.

In closing, let us return to the fears exhibited through the anecdotes at the outset; we can now comment on why the fears are misplaced. We said that the anecdotes revealed the following:

- (a) a lack of understanding of the facility with which children learn two languages at a time.

It is very clear that children are extremely capable of learning more than one language at once, without getting confused, and without long-term detriments to any of those languages. While at the outset there may be differences across children in performance – differences that should be taken into consideration when trying to assess children’s language and cognitive abilities – there is eventual parity across groups, as long as children continue to be exposed to both languages. Bilingual children then have all the benefits that accrue from speaking either language, and in addition have the bonus that they speak two languages instead of one.

- (b) a suspicion that bilingual children are “at risk” for academic achievement.

Nothing can be further from the truth. Studies comparing the academic achievement of bilingual or multilingual children to monolingual children have shown that the former group meets or exceeds the latter (e.g., Cenoz et al., 2013). In fact, there is clear evidence that in some areas, such as reading, what is learned in relation to one language can carry over to the other language (Oller & Pearson, 2002). Because of this, some experts in bilingual education have been actively promoting the use of translanguaging, or pedagogical practices that promote the active transfer of knowledge between the child’s two languages, in the classroom (García, 2009; Jones & Lewis, 2014).

- (c) a lack of understanding of the range of factors contributing to patterns of development.

Every child’s experience with language is different; every child’s performance in language is the product of all of the above factors. This means that it

is highly improbable that a given child's performance on any language or language-related task is determined by only one of the above aspects. Good practice in any applied field that concerns bilingual children will take these multiple aspects into consideration.

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## Chapter 5

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