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Article *in* Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research · February 2018

DOI: 10.1080/13260219.2017.1430489

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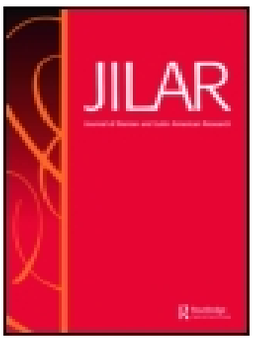

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Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research

ISSN: 1326-0219 (Print) 2151-9668 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjil20

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To cite this article: Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire (2018): Parental Ideologies and Family Language Policies among Spanish-speaking Migrants to New Zealand, Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research, DOI: 10.1080/13260219.2017.1430489

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/13260219.2017.1430489

JOURNAL OF IBERIAN AND LATIN AMERICAN RESEARCH, 2018
https://doi.org/10.1080/13260219.2017.1430489

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ABSTRACT

The latest New Zealand Census figures indicate that between 2006 and 2013 over five thousand speakers of Spanish joined the nation's population, mostly as the result, we can assume, of the recent spike in immigration from Spanish-speaking countries. Within migrant and/or transnational families, the maintenance of linguistic and cultural legacies depends on effective intergenerational transmission of the heritage language, which in turn is dependent on parental decisions on language practices and management in the home. In view of this, what do Spanish-speaking migrants to New Zealand take in consideration when making decisions relating to family language policies? The present article reports on a small qualitative study of the beliefs at the basis of the self-reported home language policies of a group of New Zealand immigrants in the transmission of their native language(s) to their children. Through a specific focus on narrative data from a small number of Spanish-speaking participants, it illustrates these parents' attitudes towards their part in the bi/multilingual development of their children, highlighting, in particular, the key role that local, mixed-origin Spanish-speaking communities can play in supporting and extending linguistic and cultural maintenance in the home.

KEYWORDS

Family language policy; ideologies; heritage languages; Spanish language; New Zealand

Over the last two decades New Zealand has become what has been termed a superdiverse nation.[1] It rates third on the list of most ethnically diverse countries in the OECD.[2] It is currently home to at least 160 languages.[3] Despite an increasing recognition of its multicultural status in both official and everyday contexts, New Zealand is a society where monolingual practices and discourses still prevail, and where the most widespread mind-set views English as effectively the only valuable language.[4] This monolingual bias is reflected in the way linguistic diversity as a whole is conceptualized and managed at the national policy level. New Zealand has no comprehensive national language policy to protect its increasing linguistic diversity: language-related policies, where they exist, tend to be dependent on discrete government departments' right to decide whether and how languages might be incorporated into areas such as education, health, housing and business, leading to an overall approach to managing the country's linguistic diversity which is necessarily partial

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and disparate.[5] Within the New Zealand education system, the bulk of language-related policies are concerned with the teaching and learning of te reo Māori as the country's *de jure* official language and of English as the *de facto* dominant language. While this might be viewed as an advantage by some immigrant parents who wish their children to develop English proficiency for educational achievement and social integration, research has shown that migrant parents often simultaneously want their children to acquire and/or maintain the heritage language (or HL).[6] Unfortunately, in the absence of actual structures to maintain and promote such languages, policies aimed at encouraging the learning of English as a means to optimal integration into New Zealand society do, in actual fact, perpetuate monolingual discourses and largely relegate heritage languages to the home/family domain.

The existence of strong heritage language use in the home is an important factor for maintenance, as if not hindered, natural intergenerational transmission of languages can occur within the family domain with parents and siblings playing a key role in children's HL development.[7] That said, the idea that all migrant children will naturally maintain their HL language and easily become bilingual by simply acquiring the language of the new country has long been refuted, and it is now a well-known fact that raising bilingual children is a complex and at times challenging task.[8] In fact, common patterns of language shift mean that within migrant populations HLs are often lost within three generations.[9] Even children who are proficient speakers of the HL on arrival in the host country will tend to replace it with the dominant one if concerted parental efforts are not made towards encouraging and preserve the family language.[10] Research has consistently found that parental attitudes towards the heritage language can have a considerable impact on their children's proficiency and on its maintenance as a whole, showing that, in essence, the more parents value and use the heritage language, the more their children tend to acquire and maintain it.[11] It follows that children's chances of developing the HL largely depends on the way parents manage language use in the home, and this is especially true in contexts where the home is the only domain where the HL is spoken, as in such contexts the onus of maintenance rests exclusively on the shoulders of the families.

Understanding the dynamics of intergenerational transmission of heritage language in the home is crucial to understanding the processes leading to maintenance and shift in minority language settings, and yet despite the well documented importance of family interactions for HL maintenance and the growing interest in issues of family language policy, we still know relatively little about the dynamics involved in language transmission in the home in migrant settings. In this regard, New Zealand offers a largely unexplored research context with the potential to investigate these issues within families from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and to furthermore explore the possible relationships between local societal attitudes and language policies (or lack thereof) and heritage language use and maintenance in the home. The study on which the current article is based aims to contribute to the bridging of this research gap by applying Bernard Spolsky's model of language policy as a theoretical framework in exploring the family language policies of a number of immigrant families to New Zealand.[12] Family language policy (or FLP) is a relatively new area of research within applied linguistics that investigates how languages are managed, learned and negotiated within families.[13] FLP is broadly defined as the "explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home among the family members."[14]

Recent research in both the fields of bilingualism and early child education have consistently highlighted that such planning plays an important role in children's language development in immigrant families.[15] However, the range of factors that can influence the outcome of parents' efforts in passing on their own language to the next generation is extensive. Spolsky's model of language policy proposes that such factors can be classified into three components: language practices (the everyday ways in which languages are used in the home), language management (the conscious ways in which language use is managed, for example by making it a rule to only speak one language in the home) and language ideologies, which include the attitudes and beliefs about languages that lie at the basis of both language practices and language management.[16] Language ideologies encompass beliefs and attitudes about the perceived utility, value and status of the languages available in any given context, and are considered the key driving force behind family language policy. Ultimately, family language policies are determined by parental perceptions of what supports the wellbeing of the family and such perceptions are often shaped by the parents' own social, cultural and historical background and by specific life experience as well as by the media and the various societal pressures each family might be exposed to.[17] Whatever the specifics of each particular setting, parental ideologies are considered to be among the most important predicators of successful family language policies. It is not surprising therefore to find that issues relating to the role of parental beliefs in family language policy are increasingly being researched in different minority language groups and from different sociolinguistic perspectives.[18] Recent research tends to focus, in particular, on the relationship between ideologies, practices and management with the aim of identifying ways to promote minority language maintenance in the family context.[19]

Research on family language policy in New Zealand is in its early stages, but already some important contributions have helped researchers form an overall idea of the dynamics and issues relevant to immigrant parents within the local linguistic ecology and socio-political context, as well as much needed information of specific challenges facing particular migrant groups.[20] However, within this emerging body of literature and also more generally within sociolinguistic research in New Zealand, Spanish as a migrant language is largely underrepresented.[21] Drawing on a broader investigation of family language policies among migrant families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, the present article contributes to current understandings of the experiences of Spanish-speaking migrants to this part of the world and to FLP research within the New Zealand context by offering an exploration of Spanish-speaking migrant parents' ideologies about HL acquisition and maintenance in the home context. As the article will discuss, like parents from other cultural backgrounds, Spanish-speaking migrants to New Zealand tend to explain their wishes and efforts towards their children's linguistic development in terms of the advantages, benefits and values associated with the HL and bilingualism, readily displaying perspectives developed through their own experiences as bi/multilinguals and reporting stances and practices that they perceive as a natural part of their role as caring parents.

The article begins with some historical and sociolinguistic notes on the presence on the New Zealand Spanish-speaking population, followed by an outline of the study's design and methodology. Next, we present the study's main findings, organized around three main thematic nodes and based on a discussion of data excerpts from the study's Spanish-speaking participants. Finally, the article closes with a summary of the study's main conclusions and some suggestions on future research directions.

Speakers of Spanish in New Zealand

According to the latest Census, the total number of Spanish-speaking individuals in New Zealand is 26, 979, which admittedly clumps together native speakers and second/foreign language learners, but that overall still provides a useful indicative measure of the position of Spanish language within the national linguistic ecology. The figure, as can reasonably assumed, will include a vast majority of immigrants to New Zealand with Spanish as their first language.[22]

Migration to New Zealand from Spanish-speaking countries is a relatively recent phenomenon. While New Zealand as a nation was literally built on immigration, all early migration consisted mainly of immigrants from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Northern Europe, and it wasn't until the immigration reforms of the 1990s that New Zealand began to receive considerable numbers of migrants from Spain and Latin American countries. Differently from the earlier sporadic arrivals of political refugees from Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Colombia and Peru, most of today's New Zealand's Spanish speaking population, is constituted by young students and professionals from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay who have entered the country under the government's Latin America Strategy, which aims to foster foreign policy and political links, trade and economic links and people-to-people links between New Zealand and Latin America.[23] Thanks to this policy and to the growing worldwide appeal of New Zealand as a migratory target, within the last few years the number of Spanish-speaking migrants has grown exponentially, with the portion originating from Latin America having doubled in size between the last two censuses.[24] Over this period, migrants from Spanish-speaking countries have settled mostly around the main urban centers of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and while this has not yet resulted in clearly identifiable Latino quarters or neighborhoods, Spanish-speaking individuals from different national backgrounds do seem to share a positive view of a common New Zealand Latino identity which has contributed to the establishment of local Spanish-speaking networks and given rise to a multitude of associations and events for the expression and preservation of cultural identity and activities, particularly revolving around music, dance and food, such as the Sociedad el Tango de Barrio in Wellington and the annual Latin Fiesta event in Auckland.[25]

Despite the still relatively small size of the local Spanish-speaking population, the status of Spanish as an international language has long been recognized in New Zealand and Spanish has been taught as a foreign language within the national school curriculum since 1995 as "a particularly significant language for New Zealand because of the important economic and cultural ties this country is developing with Spain, Latin America, and the rest of the Spanish-speaking world."[26] Overall, enrolments in classes of Spanish as a foreign language in New Zealand mainstream schools have steadily grown in the last twenty years.[27] That said, Spanish is far from being offered in every New Zealand high school and its popularity as a foreign language does not necessarily support its maintenance as a heritage language among Spanish-speaking families and communities. In fact, existing research suggests that while supported by communities and validated by an overall growing popularity of Latin American cultures, the use of Spanish as a heritage language in New Zealand is typically relegated limited to the home domain, and because of this, the language appears to be undergoing typical patterns of intergenerational language shift, with use within the family and participation to local Spanish-speaking communities as the two main channels for the transmission and preservation of Spanish-speaking families' cultural and linguistic practices in New Zealand.[28]

Overview of the Study

The participants in the study were 20 parents of children between 1 and 21 years of age. All of them were born in countries other than New Zealand and arrived in New Zealand at different ages within the last 30 years, with the majority arriving within the last ten years. Figure 1 below provides a summary of all the participants to the study. The last four rows of the table profile the four Spanish-speaking participants, whose comments are the focus of the current article. All names are pseudonyms.

	Name	Age	Gender	From	HL
1	Kai	Early 30s	M	China	Mandarin
2	Chou	Mid 20s	F	China	Mandarin
3	Jazmin	Late 30s	F	Iran	Farsi
4	Zhiwei	Early 50s	F	Malaysia	Cantonese
5	Liling	Late 20s	F	China	Mandarin
6	Rudee	Mid 30s	F	Thailand	Thai
7	Joy	Late 30s	F	Japan	Japanese
8	Mui	Late 20s	F	China	Cantonese
9	Sinta	Early 30s	F	Indonesia	Sundanese
10	Akiko	Late 30s	F	Japan	Japanese
11	Asha	Early30s	F	India	Nepali
12	Luiza	Early 30s	F	Brazil	Portuguese
13	Elsa	Late 40s	F	Sweden	Swedish
14	Gabriel	Early 30s	M	Brazil	Portuguese
15	Silvia	Early 40s	F	Italy	Italian
16	Tina	Early 50s	F	Greece	Greek
17	Adalia	Late 40s	F	Colombia	Spanish
18	Fabricio	Late 40s	M	Colombia	Spanish
19	Cristina	Late 40s	F	Argentina	Spanish
20	Maria	Early 50s	F	Spain	Spanish/Catalan

Figure 1. Study participant details.

All participants live in the same urban center, located in New Zealand's lower North Island, and were recruited from the researcher's own personal and professional contacts and through a subsequent friend-of-friend recruitment process. Out of all respondents, eight had only children, while all others had two or more. All participants' partners/spouses were of the same ethnicity and spoke the same heritage language, except in three cases (Sinta, Akiko and Silvia), in which the spouses were New Zealanders with English as their first language. The prevalent number of female participants in the study is not the result of predetermined selection criteria, but was due to the fact that when families were invited to participate, a greater number of mothers volunteered to do so.

Data was collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews which lasted an average of 45 minutes and were conducted at the participants' convenience in their home or workplace or other suitable place (for example, a library or café).

The questions were designed to elicit information on the participants' and their families' backgrounds and on their perceived language use and overall language-related experiences in New Zealand, particularly involving their children within the home domain. The interviews covered a wide range of topics and overall took a narrative structure, encouraging the participants to contribute personal narratives, or stories.[29] All participants gave their consent to audio record the interviews, which were later transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically using the standard procedures for analyzing qualitative data by identifying categories and connections between such categories in order to achieve a satisfactory interpretation of the findings.[30]

Discussion of Findings

Within the narratives the respondents volunteered, statements suggesting specific language-related beliefs most often emerged as part of their explanations or justifications for particular instances of home language practices and/or for the establishment of specific examples of home language management. Overall, the responses show that when it comes to their children's linguistic development, the participants possess well-defined beliefs, goals and expectations which in turn are grounded in a firm conviction of the value of the heritage language and/or of bilingualism in general, and of the many ways these might benefit their children. Although the specific points highlighted by each parent vary, a global consideration of the data reveals a number of emerging patterns and themes. For ease of discussion, in the following section, the study's results are presented under three main categories of parental beliefs: beliefs about the value of the HL, beliefs about the value of bi/multilingualism and beliefs about language acquisition. Each section will begin with an introduction to the study's overall results for the relevant category, followed by a more detailed consideration of the responses from the Spanish-speaking parents, which we hope will work to emphasize issues specific to this portion of the respondents and to highlight interesting points of similarity and contrast with the rest of the results.

Beliefs About the Value of the HL

Generally speaking, in one form or another, beliefs about the value of the heritage language permeated all the interview data, consistently showing that overall, the parents in the study valued their heritage languages very much and that they tended to think of these

as important resources to be preserved, cultivated and transmitted to the next generation. Across all data, the most prevalent rationale offered for wanting the children to learn the heritage language centered on a clear acknowledgement of it as a defining element of their ethnic and cultural identity and as a necessary means for the acquisition of the associated worldview and of culture-specific traditions and behaviors. The following statements illustrate these points:

> It's important because it's our mother tongue. (Zhiwei)
>
> Language is just like a heritage. (Liling)
>
> The language reminds them of who they are. (Joy)
>
> Because that's who he is. That's the person he is. He's Thai. (Rudee)
>
> She will learn the culture through the language. (Jazmin)
>
> Without the language it's much harder [*to maintain the culture*]. (Kai)

The positions emerging from such statements represent the idea that an individual's identity is both framed and enacted through language use, and an understanding of language as key to access to and membership into specific communities, both of which are well aligned with a sociocultural perspective to language as both a constituent of and a mediator to culture.[31] Among the social benefits afforded by competence in the heritage language, many parents also spoke of its role in maintaining relationships among immediate family members and with more distant HL-speaking relatives, particularly grandparents, who for most of the participating families, permanently resided abroad, in the family's country of origin.

> We want her to be able to speak with our families in Iran, with her grandparents and her cousins. (Jazmin)
>
> They need it to speak with my family in Japan. (Akiko)
>
> For my mother… She would like him to speak Indonesian. (Sinta)
>
> To speak to our families in China, because they don't speak English. (Chou)

That said, many of the arguments for the value of the HL were more purely pragmatic, with several parents expressing the belief that fluency in the HL would represent a potential advantage for their children through enhanced employment and/or business opportunities, thus acknowledging what Pierre Bourdieu identified as the cultural capital associated with competence in a language, or, in other words, the value of a language in terms of its potential to bring about status and power, particularly through economic advantages.[32] Views reflecting the cultural capital of the HL were particularly evident in the responses of Chinese-born parents, some of whom identified Cantonese or other Chinese languages as their own mother tongue and yet reported having established family language policies designed to teach their children Mandarin on account of its high value as an international language.

Some Spanish-speaking parents, too, viewed Spanish as a valuable, widely spoken international language that might one day equip their children with superior career prospects:

> In today's world, Spanish is an important language. (Maria)
>
> For travelling, for working; Spanish is spoken all over the world. (Cristina)
>
> Spanish is a huge language. A lot of people in the world speak Spanish so he should keep it. (Adalia)

Generally speaking, however, responses from the Spanish-speaking parents particularly highlighted the affective value of Spanish, and specifically its role in contributing to the children's overall wellbeing, not only as a means for establishing meaningful relationships with other family members, but also by providing a solid foundation for the children's developing sense of self. Speaking of a recent trip to Argentina, Cristina told of how her five-year-old NZ-born daughter Anita "discovered" the rest of her Argentinian family:

> I think she was very surprised on our last trip to Argentina because she realized that her family is a lot bigger than just mami, papi and her brother. She realized that there is something else, a bigger family, and that it is hers, and that she's one of them. Aunties and uncles and cousins that all speak Spanish. So now she has a great connection to Argentina and the language is part of that, and her teachers say how she quite often says that she's from Argentina. She was born here but… "I'm from Argentina," she says. She has chosen that for herself. (Cristina)

Cristina's explanations point to the importance of the heritage language as instrumental to a healthy sense of belonging within key social environments, but also as an aspect of the children's own developing perception of themselves as individuals, including specific aspects of their self-concept and social identity.

The somewhat related idea of the heritage language as the voice of one's true self also permeates many of the responses from the Spanish-speaking parents, who quite often expressed a strong sense of comfort—at times bordering on relief—associated with the use of Spanish in the home:

> It's still an effort to speak English, so we don't speak it at home. Spanish is the language we can relax in when we go home. (Maria)

> It's my language, and of course I need to be myself with him. (Fabricio)

> It's a connection with me, so it's special that way. (Adalia)

> Spanish for me is the language of emotion and intimacy. It's the language of love. My relationship with them is in Spanish. (Cristina)

The above statements illustrate strong beliefs in the exclusive position of Spanish as the only possible means for the expression of the parents' true self, and thus as the only basis for truly intimate relationships, not only between the parents and their children, but also between the children and other Spanish-speaking family members. Cristina stressed this point in relation to her daughter's connection with her Argentinian grandparents:

> They [Anita's grandparents] are happy just to watch her, of course, they love her, […] but if she speaks Spanish they feel closer. For me it's a big issue. And all it takes is a word or two for the whole week and it's the world to them. It's the way they reclaim their granddaughter in a way, otherwise she's this beautiful girl and she's happy and alive, but she's this person they don't really know. (Cristina)

The excerpt speaks volumes about the role of the heritage language in mediating the children's communication with faraway family members, but also—and above all—as a symbol of a shared identity as HL speakers, which is crucial in establishing the degree of emotional closeness normally associated with relationships within the family and thus also important in the maintenance of family cohesion.[33]

Beliefs About the Value of Bilingualism

A second category of beliefs that emerged as significant in the establishment of language policies within the participating families had to do with the parents' perceptions of the

value of bi/multilingualism, with responses relating to this point expressing a universal agreement on the advantages of bi/multilingualism over monolingualism, and on the types of benefits associated with being able to speak the heritage language as well as English as the local dominant language. In fact, while all the parents shared the belief that English is an important language both in New Zealand and internationally, and were adamant that the children would do well to learn it in order to reap all of the associated benefits, they also all shared the perspective that competence in two or more languages would represent an additional advantage, and that whenever possible bi/multilingualism should be encouraged. Bourdieu's economic metaphors are once again useful for understanding why this might be the case: primarily, for many of the parents bi/multilingualism represents a form of economic capital which can lead to career opportunities and overall economic advantages.[34] With a good portion of the parents' responses acknowledging the importance that transnational identities and connections might come to play in their children's future, their consensus on the advantages of bi/multilingualism is not at all surprising, as in many of the parents' minds bilingualism is a goal worthy of pursuing, particularly considering that in many foreign countries—including many of the participants' countries or origin—children receive a multilingual education as a matter of routine, leaving children raised in monolingual societies such as New Zealand at a disadvantage.

> Having two languages is always better than having just one. (Kai)
>
> Bilingualism is an advantage in today's world. (Akiko)
>
> Languages give you mobility, independence, and autonomy. (Gabriel)
>
> In today's world, English is not enough. (Elsa)
>
> In Malaysia people speak three or four languages, even in primary school they study three languages, English, Chinese and Malay. But here… Just English, So it's good that they learn Chinese at home, it's important. (Zhiwei)

The above responses point to the fact that parents tend to think of their efforts towards raising bilingual children as an investment that will yield positive returns which might include the ability to traverse linguistic borders to achieve financially successful careers.[35] The data also shows that the parents are prepared to expend time, efforts and money to ensure that their children grow up speaking more than one language, with many considering such sacrifices an integral part of their role as good parents.

> It's up to us, as parents. (Joy)
>
> It really comes down to us, being strict and pushing it. (Lanah)
>
> It's not easy, but it's my job and I'll make it work. (Chou)
>
> It's our job to know what's best for our children. (Asha)

But of course, bilingualism doesn't just have economic benefits, and many parents also mentioned the fact that the ability to speak multiple languages can help in the dissolution of social and cultural barriers, thus potentially contributing to an enhanced appreciation for other cultures and peoples, and so to a richer, more meaningful life:

> It makes you understand and appreciate other cultures. (Liling)
>
> Bilingual people are more open-minded. (Rudee)
>
> For work experience, and life experience. (Chou)
>
> If you speak more than one language you can connect to more people and you can help them. (Zhiwei)

Overall the Spanish parents' comments are well aligned with those from the other participants in the study in painting a positive picture of bilingualism as desirable and well worth the efforts involved in supporting it in the home.

> Don't lose Spanish and also learn English. It's very important in today's world. (Adalia)

> It's the twenty-first century, he needs that bigger scope. He's born in a multilingual age, so it's an advantage. (Fabricio)

In fact, as the above statements indicate, Spanish-speaking parents often spoke of bi/multilingualism as not only an advantage but as a necessity, often supporting their arguments with examples from their own personal and professional lives as evidence for the range of benefits that it can offer. Maria did this very eloquently by saying: "You travel, you study, you work, you see the world. Because that's what I did I think it's important, but still, I want them to have all those opportunities." Cristina's response followed an almost identical line of reasoning when she explained:

> To speak and to understand as many languages as you can in the world we live in now is so important. She [*Anita*] will be able to travel, interact, find a job in a place and stay if she wants. Maybe it's because I travelled and I enjoyed it… Maybe she will be a Kiwi girl and she'll want to stay in New Zealand all her life, but I want to prepare her in case she doesn't. (Cristina)

Because of the advantages of bi/multilingualism that the parents themselves were able to enjoy, and because of the onerous costs, efforts and sacrifices normally associated with learning a foreign language, Spanish-speaking parents often spoke of their children's opportunity to grow up with more than one language as "lucky" or as "a privilege." For some, then, the establishment of policies in support of the maintenance of Spanish in the home was meant to ensure that their children's natural potential to grow up bi/multilingual would not go to "waste." For these parents, establishing the right conditions for the use of Spanish in the home and creating opportunities to do so constituted an integral part of their investment in their children's bilingual training. For Fabricio this included arranging for his ten-year-old son frequent trips back to Colombia, and even organizing for the boy to spend a full year living there in the care of relatives, so that he could attend the local school and perfect both his spoken and written Spanish. Fabricio explained: "Some time in Colombia would improve his language, and [help him] learn to write in Spanish, so I've been asking the schools over there and thinking about it. We could go together and I could stay for a month or so and then leave him then go back after a few months." Fabricio admits it would be very difficult to live away from his son for a whole year, but that it would be "the right thing to do," clearly illustrating the high degree of investment that some parents are prepared to make to ensure their children grow up as bi/multilinguals.

Beliefs About Language Acquisition

A third category of beliefs that emerged as significant in the participating families' home language policies encompasses a wide range of parental beliefs about language acquisition and about the ways in which language learning might be encouraged and supported in the home.

By far the most mentioned fact about language acquisition in the data related to the advantages of learning languages at a young age, ideally as young as possible, possibly beginning at birth. According to the many parents who commented on this, while the

efforts required to learn (and to teach) the heritage language are considerable, especially in an environment where it is not commonly used in domains other than the home, these can be greatly reduced if families commit to exclusively and consistently speak the HL to their children from the very beginning. That said, the belief in the advantages in an early start when it comes to HL learning in itself encompassed a number of other beliefs, including the idea that children's learning capabilities are much superior to those of adults, as well as an awareness of the impact that entering the school environment has on the children's linguistic development, which lead many parents to express little preoccupation about their children's development of English, but to be concerned about the potential degree of language shift the children might display once they enter mainstream education.

> We're not worried about English, English will come. (Luiza)
>
> If we don't focus on it now, he will lose it. (Kai)
>
> Once they go to school, that's when it gets difficult. (Zhiwei)
>
> No matter what language he uses outside, in here we only speak Nepali, so it's just natural, he'll always have it. (Asha)

Given the overall agreement on the importance of an early start in HL learning and of the need to make the home a HL-only domain, it's no surprise to find that when given the opportunity to comment on the factors having the biggest impact on HL learning, most parents pointed to the family itself, both in terms of the senior members' conscious efforts to support the HL in the home, but also as a distinctive group of people whose relationships with each other would foster not only HL use, but also the HL culture and positive attitudes about it, which many parents identified as key to HL maintenance. Although by no means all the families included in the study could be described as embedded in local communities of HL speakers, in cases where HL-based connections beyond the family existed, these were generally viewed as important for the children's development of the HL, even when such connections consisted in as little as two or three HL-speaking individuals that might regularly visit the home and use the HL with the children.

> Parents are first, but visitors and friends are also important. (Jazmin)
>
> The community plays a big role, at least for our language. (Asha)
>
> The language environment is very important. (Chou)
>
> They can see that they are not alone, and that it's not just mum and dad, other people speak it too. (Rudee)
>
> After two weeks in Iran her Farsi was perfect. (Jazmin)

Finally, as already illustrated by Fabricio's story and Jazmin's statement above, regular trips back to the country of origin were rated very high on the list of factors that positively impacted the children's HL development, with some parents reporting many examples of dramatic improvements in the children's HL fluency directly associated with sojourns in the country of origin, prompting some of the parents to consider adding regular travel and long stays with HL-speaking relatives—most often the children's own grandparents—to the list of practical ways to support the children's language development and maintenance.

The language policies of Spanish-speaking households, too, were reported to be based on specific beliefs to do with language learning and teaching, which again in many cases emerged as tied to the parents' own language learning experiences, such as, for example, a firm belief in the importance of literacy, not only as an important aspect of the language

in itself, but also as a tool for further learning, particularly in terms of language genres and styles that the children would not be exposed to in the home domain. Adalia, for example, explained that while she was satisfied with the quality her son's spoken Spanish, she was beginning to think of possible ways to encourage him to practice his writing skills as well. She justified this by recounting an incident that helped her become aware of the value of being able to write a language as well as speak it:

> Just the other day I was trying to write something in English in an official document, and my neighbor who is a Kiwi woman, I asked her to check it and it was all wrong… Not wrong but different, like she would say "we don't do that, and we don't do that." You know I can speak English but writing is different from spoken, and you need it for this kind of things too, so I want David to be a bilingual person in all of the ways, not just speaking, but writing, reading… All of it. Because it's easy to learn how to speak, but it's really difficult to write, because we construct sentences differently, so I want to do some things to make sure that he keeps writing in Spanish. (Adalia)

Adalia also commented on how as a parent wanting to transmit the HL to the next generation, "you need to love your roots and be open," which points to another factor that emerged as significant in Spanish-speaking parents' views of what's important in HL transmission, namely the necessity of maintaining a positive view and connection to one's cultural heritage in order to pass on the HL to the children. For the Spanish-speaking respondents this included the establishment and maintenance of close connections with Spanish-speakers beyond the home domain and, when possible, the active participation in the life of the local Spanish-speaking community. Significant connections of this kind were highly praised by all of the Spanish-speaking respondents for the positive impact they had on their children's HL development, not only for the opportunities they offered to take part in activities and interaction with native speakers of the HL, but also for the affective value of establishing meaningful relationships with Spanish speakers other than family members.

> The Latin American community plays a role, of course. (Maria)

> Soccer with his Latin American friends has been important. (Fabricio)

> I would never do anything to damage those connections. They justify why mummy speaks Spanish, that it's important for relationships. (Cristina)

What is particularly interesting about the group mentioned in the above statements is the fact that differently from the other communities mentioned by parents in the study (for example, the Chinese community, the Greek community, the Bhutanese community), the local Spanish-speaking community transcends national boundaries to include members from a range of Spanish-speaking countries, most of which are in South America, hence the way the parents label it "the Latin American community." Within such a diverse group of immigrant individuals and families, Spanish, as the common language, truly serves as the glue holding people together by creating a local Latino identity that applies to all its members regardless of their country of origin, helping support the maintenance of Spanish as a heritage language beyond the boundaries of the family.

Concluding Remarks

This article has presented a discussion of how a group of immigrant parents to New Zealand explain and justify the self-reported language practices and management measures that determine the patterns of language use within their families in the home domain. Within

the adopted family language policy framework, the language beliefs emerging from the participants' responses serve as a conceptual tool towards reaching an understanding of how immigrant families establish and implement their family language policies.

The results of the study suggest that the parents' views about the value of their heritage language and of bilingualism, and their beliefs about language acquisition constitute the basis of decisions and stances relating to their daily home language practices, and that therefore these must be counted among the factors that shape family language policies aimed at the children's bi/multilingual development. In particular, the study indicates that many parents hold the belief that language use frames and defines one's identity, and that the HL language is a valuable mediator for the associated cultural knowledge and world-view. Echoing the tenets of a sociocultural perspective of language, these parents believe in the positive value of the HL as a necessary element in the development of their children's own social identity, sense of self and overall wellbeing, and as an essential means for the establishment and maintenance of meaningful relationships with significant HL-speakers, both within and beyond the family. This last point was particularly evident in the responses from the Spanish-speaking parents, who stressed the idea of Spanish as the language of their true self, and, in Cristina's words, as "the language of love," and thus of its exclusive role in building truly intimate relationships.

But individual and social motivations are not the only considerations at the basis of these parents' family language policies, as practical and pragmatic reasons also play a role in how decisions to do with the children's linguistic development are made. The study uncovers plentiful evidence that the parents believe languages to be a source of cultural, social and economic capital, and that their assessment of the value of specific languages is well aligned with their relative market-values in the current global culture. The Spanish-speaking parents, in particular, show a high awareness of the value of Spanish as an international language, and of English-Spanish bilingualism as a potentially profitable combination for their children to possess in today's global economy.

Finally, the parents in the study display a high awareness of the complexity and challenges involved in the process of language learning, an awareness they most likely developed as a result of their own language learning journeys and experiences. Their identities as bi/multilinguals and as immigrants to sometimes linguistically unfamiliar environments allow them to understand the advantages of bi/multilingual competencies and to think strategically about language management in the home to ensure their children reap the full benefits of the language resources at their disposal. Overall, both despite and because of the lack of official support that migrant languages receive in New Zealand, and in full awareness of the challenges that they face in raising bilingual children in a strongly monolingual society, these parents tend to view HL transmission as a serious responsibility, and to see their role as policy makers as a key part of being a good parent. In the case of the Spanish-speaking parents who participated, it is particularly heartening to find a strong acknowledgment of the local Latin American community as a natural extension of the family that helps support the transmission of Spanish as a heritage language independently from the individual members' own national affiliations.

This qualitative study is based on a relatively sample of only twenty families, and with only four representing the Spanish-speaking sample, naturally has some limitations. Above all, the small number of respondents and the highly subjective nature of the views expressed necessarily mean that the results might not representative of wider populations. That said,

by offering a discussion of the specific, albeit subjective, rationales parents provide as justification for their own choices related to use and management of the heritage language in the home, the study has uncovered some interesting ideological patterns seemingly driving family language policies among immigrant families to New Zealand, thus making a small but useful contribution to the emergent local body of literature on family language policy and to research on Spanish as a heritage language in New Zealand.

With regard to recommended future research avenues, as the study has explored the ideological elements that the parents themselves presented as the basis of FLP decision making, a useful complementary investigation would ideally center around actual examples of home language practices and management adopted by different immigrant households, and specifically focus on how these might reflect aspects of parental ideologies. Researchers endeavoring to inquire into this and related topics will do well to remember that while language ideologies may be considered strongly influential in shaping family language policies, they do not always result into actually corresponding practices.[36] Because of this we would strongly recommend that future research aims to investigate the three-way nexus between language ideology, practice and management adopts ethnographic methods of data collection to include the direct observation of language practices and management in the home as well as standard qualitative explorations of family members' language attitudes and beliefs.

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