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Cherishing the heritage language. Predictors of parental heritage language maintenance efforts

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Aims: Multilingual families are often challenged with the transmission of their heritage language (HL) to future generations. Departing from this observation, the present study aims to investigate which factors correlate with multilingual families' HL maintenance efforts. The variables taken into account are: the families' language policy (FLP), advice from both Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) professionals and other (informal) sources, the parents' linguistic and educational resources, as well as their migration generation.

Methodology: Exclusively quantitative in nature, the data for this study involve 776 multilingual families in the Flemish community of Belgium.

Analysis: These data have subsequently been subjected to two inferential analyses: a bivariate correlational analysis followed by a logistic regression for a more detailed understanding of the relations at play.

Findings: The results indicate a positive correlation between families' policies and their HL maintenance efforts, in addition to confirming the independence of FLP's three components (beliefs, practices & management). Furthermore, contrary to advice from ECCE professionals, advice from other sources is positively and significantly associated with HL maintenance efforts. Finally, families comprised of parents with access to higher linguistic and educational resources are less likely to try and pass on the HL to their children, probably favouring the acquisition of the Institutional Language (IL).

Originality: This paper quantitatively explores factors that correlate with parental HL maintenance efforts using a large and language-diverse sample. This quantitative approach facilitates generalisations for future (qualitative) research and advice-giving bodies to build on.

Significance: Our findings bring about greater insights into the motivation of parents concerning HL maintenance and could contribute to the advice given to multilingual families.

Introduction

Multilingualism remains a hot topic in both societal debates and research. Multilingual families, regularly the subject of these debates and studies, face several challenges in their

daily lives, one of which is the predicament of heritage language maintenance. Many parents struggle with the desire and pressure for their children to acquire both the heritage language (HL) and the institutional language (IL), fearing that acquisition of the former might hinder mastery of the latter (De Houwer, 2017, p. 9; 2020; Kaveh, 2017; Sevinç, 2016).

Notwithstanding, while children eventually master the IL (to a certain degree), HL acquisition is much more precarious and requires qualitative and frequent exposure, a responsibility mostly shouldered by parents. With intergenerational transmission being a requisite for HL maintenance (Fishman, 1991; Schwartz, 2008; Spolsky, 2012), HL preservation depends largely on parental and family support (S. M. Park, 2013). In order to support parents willing to transmit the HL, it is important to not only understand what makes their efforts successful, but also what factors might influence these efforts.

To our knowledge, these factors have not yet been examined via large-scale data from a language-diverse sample, and as a result, the unique contribution of family language policy over external advice and family resources, have not yet been established. Such an approach, however, might facilitate generalizations for future research and advice-giving bodies to build on. The present study addresses this lacuna by examining several factors that might prompt parents to try and expose their child to the HL as often as possible. In doing so, we approach different aspects of multilingual families, such as their family language policy, received advice, educational and linguistic resources, and migration generation. Using survey data from 776 multilingual families in the HL-diverse Flemish Community of Belgium, we explore how each of these variables relates to parental HL maintenance efforts. Our results might lead to measures supporting families in their efforts.

Theoretical framework

Heritage language maintenance

On account of the research context and heterogeneity of our sample, we opted for the terms institutional and heritage language, rather than majority and minority language, because we do not want to focus on the number of people who speak the language but on the official status that these languages might have, as reflected by their usage in official institutions or only in non-formal settings such as in the family domain. In this article, institutional language (IL) refers to Dutch, the mainstream language used in official institutions and schools in the Flemish Community, however not the language spoken by the majority of people in the Brussels-Capital Region, where French is the dominant language. The umbrella *heritage language* (HL) covers all non-Dutch languages in our sample, representing a heterogeneous group of languages with which the speakers have personal ties, disregarding their proficiency and actual language use (Valdés, 2001; Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003). Because our sample includes languages with higher prestige, which are, moreover, taught in Flemish schools (e.g., English and French), we prefer the term heritage language to minority language (Benmamoun, Montrul, & Polinsky, 2013).

According to several studies, HL proficiency and/or use by children can positively affect their academic achievement (Agirdag & Vanlaar, 2018) without impeding IL acquisition or

proficiency (Tsai, Park, Liu, & Lau, 2012). What is more, mother tongue instruction has been demonstrated to benefit (literacy) proficiency of both the mother tongue and the institutional language (Ganuza & Hedman, 2019). Furthermore, language maintenance is often linked with well-being. Parents who are unable to transfer the HL, for instance, risk experiencing a sense of failure, while a successful HL transfer is linked with a higher sense of well-being for all family members (De Houwer, 2017; Liu, Benner, Lau, & Kim, 2009; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). In addition, the lack of a shared language might be harmful for family cohesion, emotional bonding and communication altogether (Portes & Hao, 1998; Soehl, 2016). Yet, families often struggle to preserve the HL beyond the third generation (Alba, Logan, Lutz, & Stults, 2002; Fishman, 1991). The prerequisite of intergenerational transmission makes families the corner stone of HL maintenance (Fishman, 1991; Pauwels, 2005; Schwartz, 2008; Spolsky, 2004, 2012). A family's unwillingness or inability to pass the HL eventually leads to a language shift towards the IL. While HL proficiency can be considered when describing HL maintenance or shift (de Bot, 2001), the focus lies on continued HL use in one or more domains (Pauwels, 2016). HL maintenance can thus be defined as "the continuing use of a language in the face of competition from a regionally and socially more powerful language" (Mesthrie & Leap, 2000, p. 253). Several factors within the family domain are suggested to impact the success rate of language maintenance: these include, among others, linguistic (presence of HL speakers, children's HL exposure at home, etc.) and non-linguistic factors (educational background, social class, ethnicity, etc.) (Pauwels, 2005, 2016). Furthermore, parents are often challenged by the societal attitudes towards the HL and language maintenance and the changing socio-economic or political conditions in which they raise a family (Eisenclas & Schalley, 2017; Pauwels, 2005, 2019; Winter & Pauwels, 2007). Departing from the theoretical framework of family language policy and the factors that are believed to influence the components of this framework, the present study builds on previous research and investigates the effect of some of the aforementioned factors on parental willingness to transmit the HL.

Family language policy

In order for children to master and (confidently) use a language, frequent and qualitative input is needed (De Houwer, 2007; Hoff et al., 2012; Quiroz, Snow, & Zhao, 2010). Especially in the case of (precarious) HLs, the home environment is critical in providing children with the necessary exposure, relying heavily on parental HL use and maintenance efforts (H. Park, Tsai, Liu, & Lau, 2012; Portes & Hao, 1998; Romanowski, 2021). Building on this input-based account of language acquisition, the family language policy (FLP) framework describing and affecting, i.a., language use and maintenance should not be overlooked (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008). This framework consists of three independent yet interconnected components: *beliefs* (beliefs and attitudes towards language(s), multilingualism and language use), *practices* (language(s) used in family interactions), and *management* (efforts to influence family members' language use and learning outcomes) (King et al., 2008; Spolsky, 2004, 2012). As each of these components is potentially associated with HL maintenance and maintenance efforts (Hollebeke, Struys, &

Agirdag, 2020 for an overview), this study builds on the FLP framework. Viewing multilingualism and/or the HL as (economically, socio-emotionally, culturally...) advantageous, for instance, inspires parents to actively support the HL (Berardi-Wiltshire, 2018). Expressing and discussing such beliefs, might lead to conscious decisions favouring the HL or a multilingual approach (Mosty, Lefever, & Ragnarsdóttir, 2013). Furthermore, a link between various management efforts is very likely. Parents that promote HL use at home, for one, might also stimulate HL reading activities or send their child to HL classes. Lastly, the language practices of different family members can also steer or bolster HL maintenance (efforts). Parents might forego using the HL themselves because they rely on grandparents for HL input (Ruby, 2012) or they might try to counter children's IL use with an increase in HL activities (Sevinç, 2016). The present study examines whether parental HL exposure efforts (i.e., language-specific management efforts to maintain the HL) are shaped by (parental) beliefs, practices, and language-independent management efforts.

Advice

A family's language policy is subject to the influence of several external factors and family characteristics, such as the context in which the family lives, advice the family receives, socio-economic status (SES) ... (Caldas, 2012; King et al., 2008). In addition to shaping the FLP, these aspects potentially affect parental HL maintenance and maintenance efforts (Pauwels, 2005, 2019; Winter & Pauwels, 2007). Many parents with young children, for instance, seek (or obtain unsolicited) advice on multilingual childrearing from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) professionals, teachers, the extended family, popular parenting literature, parenting websites or online discussion forums (Kaveh, 2017; Piller, 2001; Piller & Gerber, 2018). However, King and Fogle (2006) suggest that parents mostly rely on their own language learning experiences and only selectively draw from obtained advice. In examining the relationship between received advice and HL maintenance efforts, this study distinguishes between ECCE professionals (whose advice might be steered by the institutional context in which these professionals operate, possibly favouring the IL) and other sources including family members, other multilingual families, social media, and popular literature.

Resources

Studies demonstrating a lag in language development in children from lower SES families partly attribute this to differences in quantity and quality of language input (Hart & Risley, 1995; Hoff, 2003; Weisleder & Fernald, 2013). In addition, SES could affect language management in multilingual families. Interestingly though, when examining the relation between SES and parental HL maintenance efforts, results are inconsistent. Several studies, for instance, suggest higher SES families invest more time and resources in HL maintenance, whereas lower SES families view the HL as a hindrance for academic success, pushing their children towards the IL (Lambert & Taylor, 1996; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Li, 2016; Zhang, 2012). Other studies, on the contrary, imply that even though higher SES

families might have more resources to expose their children to the HL, they are less likely to try and transmit this language as they feel the IL is imperative for (academic) success (Alba et al., 2002; S. H. Chen, Zhou, & Uchikoshi, 2018; Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001; Soehl, 2016). It is thus unclear whether higher SES leads parents to abandon or strengthen their efforts to transmit the HL. Furthermore, parental engagement and communication with children also vary within SES groups (Fernald & Weisleder, 2015; Schwab & Lew-Williams, 2016). As education has the greatest impact of all three SES components, this article focusses on families' educational resources. Lastly, some studies suggest that parents with a higher IL proficiency are more likely to abandon HL maintenance efforts in favour of the IL (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Phinney et al., 2001; Pillai, Soh, & Kajita, 2014). On that account, in addition to educational resources, we explore parental linguistic resources (here; respondents' IL proficiency) in relation to HL maintenance efforts.

Methodology

Research context and data collection

This study is part of the Pro-M research project conducted in the Flemish Community, Belgium's largest Community containing the Flemish Region (officially monolingual Dutch), and the Brussels-Capital Region (officially bilingual Dutch and French). Regardless of the official status of Dutch, however, the Flemish Community houses a multitude of HLs. According to a report, in 2020 30% of new-borns in the Flemish Community are spoken to by their mother in another language than Dutch (Opgroeien, 2021). The abundance of children growing up in a multilingual environment makes for an interesting research context, especially while Flemish institutions and policy makers often regard the HLs as a threat to the Dutch IL, putting emphasis on Dutch proficiency (Agirdag, 2010).

We collected data on multilingual families with at least one child younger than three, using an exhaustive survey inquiring upon the families' background, their language policy and advice on multilingualism they might have received. While many quantitative studies focus on school-aged children and teachers' impact, we concentrate on infants and toddlers. Not only are the early years of great importance for children's later development (Weisleder & Fernald, 2013), the age limit applied also allows us to investigate a context in which parents still have relative control over their family language policy and HL maintenance efforts, as compared to when children start school and interact more with peers. Due to the set-up of the Pro-M project framing our data collection, families were recruited through selected day-care locations and infant welfare clinics in nineteen municipalities in the Flemish Community where a large number of mothers do not use the dominant language (i.e., Dutch) in communication with their child. In each of the participating childcare locations and welfare clinics parents were given consent cards (available in seven languages) on which they could report their home language(s) and/or mother tongue(s) and their contact information. Based on this information, we selected families where at least one language other than Dutch is present, either as a main or additional home language or a (parental) mother tongue. These families were then invited to complete an online survey available in seven languages (Dutch,

English, French, German, Polish, Spanish and Turkish). Only families that completed the entire survey were retained for further analysis.

Sample

Our final sample consists of 776 families, representing 100 different HLs. The HLs indicated most often are French (24.1%), English (13.6%), Arabic (12.0%), Turkish (7.4%), Spanish (5.4%) and Berber (5.1%). Furthermore, 65.5% of the families indicated the presence of the Dutch institutional language within the family domain, either as the language of communication between (certain) family members, or as a parental mother tongue. Parents in our dataset reported a total of 109 different countries of birth. However, the majority (44.2%) of parents were born in Belgium. As for the focal children, almost all (96.9%) were born in Belgium. 93.6% of the families are two-parent families. The mean age of the parents in our dataset is 34.4 ($SD = 5.68$) years old, but ages vary from 17 to 61. Regarding educational resources, 57.6% of the individual parents in our sample received higher education (i.e., college or university of applied sciences; academic bachelor; or academic master), as compared to 53.5% (25-34-year-olds) and 49.8% (35-44-year-olds) in the general population (Statistics Flanders, 2022). At the level of the family unit, 69.7% of the families in our sample hold at least one degree of higher education.

Measures

Descriptive statistics of the following variables are provided in Table 1.

HL maintenance effort was measured by inquiring whether parents tried to maximise their child's exposure to the HL(s) entered earlier in the survey. (e.g., I try to make sure my child hears *Polish* as often as possible.) Respondents could answer no (0) or yes (1). In case of multiple HLs, respondents indicating to make an effort for at least one HL were classified as yes (1). In order to avoid a potential cultural bias linked to Likert scales (i.e., Likert scales are often poorly understood by or too abstract for non-Western immigrants, who tend to answer "yes" or "no" instead) we opted for a dichotomous measure (Flaskerud, 2012).

Practices were measured using a validated scale (Hollebeke, Van Oss, Struys, Van Avermaet, & Agirdag, 2022) demonstrating whether the focal child is exposed to either a monolingual Dutch context (0), a multilingual Dutch-HL context (.5) or a monolingual HL context (1). This scale ($\alpha = .82$) comprises five items; the language spoken most with the child by parents, siblings and grandparents, the language spoken most by parents amongst themselves and the overall exposure of the child at home as estimated by the parent(s) (descriptive statistics for separate items are displayed in Appendix 1). The variable was measured by calculating the mean of the scores on all five items.

Beliefs in a multilingual advantage were measured using a validated four-item index ($\alpha = .74$) (Hollebeke et al., 2022) assessing the extent to which respondents believed in a multilingual advantage for children (descriptive statistics for separate scale items are displayed in Appendix 2). The items in this scale reflect the world and aspirations of parents

raising young children (e.g., making friends). The four statements had response choices of no (0) and yes (1) and the variable was measured by calculating the mean of the scores.

Conscious management was measured by a validated scale (Hollebeke et al., 2022) consisting of three items ($\alpha = .66$) inquiring on language-general conscious management efforts, such as agreements on language use at home (descriptive statistics for separate scale items are displayed in Appendix 3). The response options for all statements were no (0) or yes (1) and the variable was measured by computing the mean of the scores.

Advice from ECCE professionals was measured by asking respondents whether they received advice on multilingualism or multilingual childrearing from an ECCE professional such as an employee of the infant welfare clinic or day-care location their child frequents. Response choices were no (0) and yes (1). In this study we do not distinguish between the type of ECCE professional parents received advice from.

Advice from other sources was measured by asking respondents whether they had looked for or received advice on multilingualism or multilingual childrearing from other sources than ECCE professionals, for instance family or friends; other multilingual families; books or folders on the subject; social media... Response choices were no (0) and yes (1). In this study we do not distinguish between the different sources of advice.

Family education was measured by inquiring on the highest obtained degree of both parents, varying from no degree to academic master. The educational resources of the family are coded by us as the family unit holding at least one degree of higher education, i.e., one or both parents received higher education (1) or the family unit holding no degree of higher education (0). Higher education was defined as either college or university of applied sciences, academic bachelor, or academic master.

Oral Dutch (IL) proficiency was measured by asking the respondents to indicate their proficiency in Dutch on a scale from very bad (1) to very good (5) for all four competencies (i.e., speaking, understanding, writing and reading). However, because we view oral proficiency (both receptive, i.e., understanding, as productive, i.e., speaking) as the most important and common language use in parents' communication with very young children, we decided to concentrate on oral proficiency. For this variable, we computed the mean of the indicated Dutch receptive and productive oral proficiency combined.

Family generation. As most focal children were born in Belgium, we defined the generations at family level based on the parental countries of birth, dividing the families into three different categories: first generation families (i.e., neither parent was born in Belgium); 1.5th generation families (i.e., one parent was born in Belgium, but the other parent was not); and second-generation families (i.e., both parents were born in Belgium).

Table 1. Sample characteristics. n, frequencies (%), means and standard deviations (SD)

Variable	n	Range	%	Mean (SD)
HL maintenance effort	774	No	26.2	
		Yes	73.8	
Practices	776	0-1		0.67 (0.31)
Beliefs	776	0-1		0.38 (0.36)
Management	774	0-1		0.76 (0.33)
Advice from ECCE professionals	774	No	66.5	
		Yes	33.5	
Advice from other sources	776	No	74.6	
		Yes	25.4	
Degree of higher education	769	No	30.3	
		Yes	69.7	
Dutch proficiency	776	1-5		4.12 (1.12)
Generation	759	1 st	38.7	
		1.5 th	34.5	
		2 nd	26.7	

Analyses

Firstly, we computed Pearson correlation coefficients in order to examine bivariate correlations among the measures described above (displayed in Table 2). In this study we mainly focus on the bivariate associations between HL maintenance effort and the other eight measures. Secondly, we conducted logistic regression analyses (SPSS Statistics V28) to examine the complex relationships in a more detailed manner. Hypothesising that HL maintenance efforts can be viewed as part of FLP and therefore probably correlate with the three components inherent to FLP, the first model focuses on practices, beliefs, and management (Table 3, FLP). The second model ascertains the relation between advice on multilingual upbringing and families' HL maintenance efforts beyond FLP by introducing the variables "advice from an ECCE professional" and "advice from other sources" (Table 3, +Advice). The third model introduces family education and the respondents' Dutch oral proficiency (Table 3, +Resources). Ultimately, in the fourth model, migration generation is introduced as a control variable (Table 3, +Generation). In dealing with missing values, we compared listwise deletion and multiple imputation (with pooled results from 20 imputed datasets). Very similar results were obtained, however, only the results using listwise deletion are presented.

Table 2. Pearson correlations between the separate measures

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. HL maintenance effort	1								
2. Practices	0.11**	1							
3. Beliefs	0.08*	0.10**	1						
4. Management	0.17***	0.06°	0.04	1					
5. Advice from ECCE professional	0.01	0.07°	0.04	0.07°	1				
6. Advice from other sources	0.08*	0.04	0.02	0.12***	0.33***	1			
7. Family education	-0.03	-0.01	-0.01	0.18***	-0.15***	0.04	1		
8. Dutch proficiency	-0.12***	-0.54***	-0.09*	-0.01	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02	1	
9. Generation	-0.09*	-0.46***	-0.15***	0.05°	-0.10**	-0.08*	0.08*	0.44***	1

° $p \leq 0.1$ * $p \leq 0.05$ ** $p \leq 0.01$ *** $p \leq 0.001$

Table 3. Logistic regression on heritage language maintenance efforts

Variable	FLP				+Advice				+Resources				+Generation			
	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	Lower	Upper	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	Lower	Upper	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	Lower	Upper	<i>b</i> (SE)	OR	Lower	Upper
Practices	0.71** (0.27)	2.04	1.20	3.47	0.71** (0.27)	2.03	1.19	3.47	0.32 (0.32)	1.38	0.73	2.60	0.23 (0.34)	1.26	0.65	2.44
Beliefs	0.44° (0.24)	1.56	0.97	2.50	0.45° (0.24)	1.57	0.98	2.53	0.43° (0.25)	1.53	0.95	2.48	0.41° (0.25)	1.50	0.93	2.43
Management	0.98*** (0.24)	2.68	1.66	4.31	0.95*** (0.25)	2.57	1.59	4.17	1.06*** (0.25)	2.89	1.76	4.75	1.07*** (0.26)	2.93	1.78	4.82
Advice from ECCE professionals					-0.22 (0.19)	0.81	0.55	1.17	-0.29 (0.20)	0.75	0.51	1.10	-0.30 (0.20)	0.74	0.50	1.09
Advice from other sources					0.43° (0.22)	1.53	1.00	2.36	0.46* (0.22)	1.59	1.03	2.45	0.46* (0.22)	1.58	1.03	2.45
Family education									-0.38* (0.20)	0.68	0.47	1.00	-0.37° (0.20)	0.69	0.47	1.02
Dutch proficiency									-0.22* (0.10)	0.81	0.67	0.98	-0.18° (0.10)	0.83	0.68	1.02
Generation													-0.24 (0.25)	0.79	0.50	1.24
1.5 th													-0.20 (0.25)	0.82	0.50	1.36
2 nd																
R ²	6%				6%				8%				8%			

° $p \leq 0.1$ * $p \leq 0.05$ ** $p \leq 0.01$ *** $p \leq 0.001$. *b* = Unstandardised coefficients. SE = Standards Errors. OR = Odds Ratios. CI = Confidence Intervals.

Results

Bivariate analyses, provided in Table 2, uncover a significant positive correlation between families' HL maintenance effort on the one hand and conscious management ($r(772) = .17$), practices ($r(772) = .11$), parental beliefs in a multilingual advantage ($r(772) = .08$) and advice from sources other than ECCE professionals ($r(772) = .08$) on the other hand. Whereas the relationship between HL maintenance effort and respondents' Dutch oral proficiency ($r(772) = -.12$) is significant but negative. While statistically significant, these correlations are very weak. Stronger correlations were found between Dutch proficiency and practices ($r(774) = -.54$); generation and practices ($r(757) = -.46$); generation and Dutch proficiency ($r(757) = .44$); and the two types of advice ($r(772) = .33$).

The logistic regression explores the relations between HL exposure efforts and the independent variables in a more comprehensive manner. In the first model three validated scales, each representing a separate FLP component, are introduced. Conscious management ($b = 0.98$, $p \leq 0.001$, OR = 2.68) and practices ($b = 0.71$, $p \leq 0.01$, OR = 2.04) are positively

and significantly correlated with HL maintenance effort, however the effect size is small. The positive association with the third FLP component, i.e., beliefs ($b = 0.44$, $p \leq 0.1$, OR = 1.56) is barely statistically significant. The second model introduces advice on multilingual childrearing. No relationship between HL maintenance effort and advice given by ECCE professionals was found. The correlation with advice from other sources than ECCE professionals ($b = 0.43$, $p \leq 0.1$, OR = 1.53) is barely statistically significant. Model 3 includes educational ($b = -0.38$, $p \leq 0.05$, OR = 0.68) and linguistic resources ($b = -0.22$, $p \leq 0.05$, OR = 0.81), both showing a negative, albeit very weak, relation to HL maintenance effort. Furthermore, the introduction of resources in the third model increases the statistical significance of advice from other sources ($b = 0.46$, $p \leq 0.05$, OR = 1.59) in relation to our outcome variable and dissipates the relation between practices and HL maintenance efforts. Lastly, we control for migration generation. While this addition to the model in itself does not show significance, it reduces the statistical significance of resources to borderline significant (education, $b = -0.37$, $p \leq 0.1$, OR = 0.69, and Dutch proficiency, $b = -0.18$, $p \leq 0.1$, OR = 0.83). The positive relationship between management ($b = 1.07$, $p \leq 0.001$, OR = 2.93) and HL maintenance efforts, however, remains statistically significant, as does the association between our dependent variable and advice from other sources ($b = 0.46$, $p \leq 0.05$, OR = 1.58). Regarding effect sizes of the relations, conscious management is the only variable demonstrating a significant, albeit small, effect size ($1.68 < \text{Odds Ratio} < 3.47$) (H. Chen, Cohen, & Chen, 2010) throughout the four models. As for model fit, the R^2 values of all four models range from 6% to 8%. The correlations described in our study and the explanatory power of our models are rather weak and should therefore be interpreted accordingly.

Discussion

HL maintenance relies heavily on qualitative and frequent exposure in the home context. Parental motivation to provide sufficient HL exposure, however, is not necessarily self-evident and could be affected by several factors within and beyond the family. Using survey data from 776 multilingual families in the Flemish Community, we explore how FLP, received advice, and educational and linguistic resources relate to parental HL maintenance efforts. A better comprehension of what motivates parents to transmit the HL, might help find ways to better support parents in their efforts to transmit the HL.

FLP

The bivariate analysis and the first two models in the logistic regression show a significant, though very weak, contribution of the three FLP components and FLP as a whole. These results suggest that parents employing a HL-oriented policy with conscious management efforts such as rules on language use at home, are more likely to try and actively maximise their children's HL exposure. Regarding the separate FLP components, the Odds Ratios (OR) in our results reveal conscious management as the strongest predictor of parental HL maintenance efforts, irrespective of advice, resources, or generation. The statistical significance and the, albeit small, effect size persist in the final model, demonstrating the

importance of conscious efforts in passing on the HL. Based on our results, we suggest that parents who openly discuss language use and set clear agreements are more aware of a HL's precarious nature and therefore might make more attempts to transmit this language. As multilingual families shoulder the responsibility of HL maintenance (e.g., Fishman, 1991; Pauwels, 2005; Spolsky, 2012), especially in a context where policy makers emphasise IL proficiency and use, such as the Flemish context, more attention should be paid to the role conscious decisions on language use can play in protecting the HL. The influence of (explicit) language-specific management efforts on language maintenance and children's language proficiency and use have been described in several studies (Hollebeke et al., 2020 for an overview), however our data suggest that these language-specific efforts are steered by language-independent management efforts. It would, thus, be interesting to explore whether the conscious management efforts, while described language-generally, are indeed language-independent. In other words, does a conscious management benefit parental institutional language (IL) exposure efforts, as well as HL maintenance efforts?

The observed association between practices and HL maintenance efforts suggests that families adopting more HL-aimed practices, are more inclined to maintain the HL. The stronger HL exposure at home (e.g., via (grand)parents or siblings) could, thus, be deliberately reinforced, underlining the important role children's HL exposure in the family context and the presence of HL speakers, often grandparents, play in successful HL maintenance (Pauwels, 2005). We propose several possible explanations for this correlation, apart from the possibly mediating effect of parental beliefs. HL-oriented practices might reveal a greater need for parents to maintain the HL (e.g., because (grand)parents do not master the IL) or could indicate that parents in these families are convinced by the feasibility of the practices or that they notice a positive effect on their children's HL comprehension, which enhances their motivation. Parents employing IL-oriented practices, on the other hand, might not perceive maximized HL exposure as valuable or might feel uncomfortable using the HL. The latter category might feel the "internal societal pressure [...] to abandon their own language" especially in the presence of non-HL speakers, as has been described in several studies (Eisenclas & Schalley, 2017, p. 9). The inclusion of family resources dispelling the statistical significance of practices could mean that practices are coloured by resources. The bivariate analysis, for instance, shows a moderately strong negative relation between practices and respondents' Dutch proficiency. Our findings, thus, support the idea that educational resources and IL proficiency not only facilitate integration into the majority society, but could potentially lead to assimilation especially if the political context, as in the case of Flanders, promotes this (Crul, Schneider, & Lelie, 2012). Furthermore, the increased Dutch proficiency and use at home (i.e., the practices) in 1.5th and second-generation families, as demonstrated in the bivariate analysis, are in line with previous findings (Alba et al., 2002; Fishman, 1991; Winter & Pauwels, 2007) and should also be viewed within the political context emphasizing IL acquisition.

Surprisingly, the relation between parental beliefs in a multilingual advantage and HL maintenance efforts is barely statistically significant, which might in part be explained by the employed scale. Whereas the validated scale corresponds with the young age of the focal children, the inclusion of beliefs-items on, for instance, work opportunities might paint a different picture. Employing the current scale, our results, offer no evidence that parents who

hold positive attitudes towards multilingualism, and presumably also towards the HL, are more inclined to attempt HL maintenance (cf. Albury, 2020; Li, 2006; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2008).

Advice

We distinguished between two sources of advice on multilingual childrearing: advice given by ECCE professionals working in infant welfare clinics and/or day-care locations families frequent on the one hand and advice from other sources (e.g., popular literature, friends and family, social media...) on the other hand. Advice offered by ECCE professionals remains negatively related, but insignificant throughout the four models. We propose that as ECCE professionals are part of the Flemish context, their advice might favour the IL (e.g., Eisenclas & Schalley, 2017; Gkaintartzi, Kiliari, & Tsokolidou, 2014; Winter & Pauwels, 2007). In any case, advice from professionals does not seem to correlate with parents' HL maintenance efforts. Contrarily, our results suggest that parents who received advice from other sources are more likely to try and maximise their children's HL exposure. This correlation might be explained by the type of advice these other sources are likely to offer, as we expect the advice might favour the HL more frequently. The possibility that parents consulted these sources voluntarily (as opposed to ECCE professionals), maybe even selectively, looking for advice that confirms their attitudes and practices and reassures them about their approach (Eisenclas & Schalley, 2017; King & Fogle, 2006), might also play a role. Once we take resources into account, the statistical significance of advice from other sources increases, but the effect size remains weak. Families with more resources might know better where to find accurate or nuanced advice and might find it easier to follow this advice (Luo, Song, Villacis, & Santiago-Bonilla, 2021; Rowe, Denmark, Harden, & Stapleton, 2016). Interestingly, the bivariate analysis uncovers a moderately strong positive significant correlation between the two sources of advice. In other words, parents who received advice from professionals were also more likely to have received advice from other sources. While our data do not elaborate on the type of advice (i.e., in favour of HL maintenance or not), it is plausible that we can distinguish between a smaller group of parents actively looking for advice on multilingual childrearing, possibly consulting multiple sources to compare the obtained advice, and a larger group of parents who do not actively seek advice and might even avoid the, often sensitive, topic of multilingualism altogether.

Resources

Lastly, we introduce educational and linguistic resources, which both demonstrate a weak negative correlation with parental efforts to expose children to the HL. In other words, the more (societally valued) resources parents have, the more likely they are to abandon their HL in favour of the IL. Linguistic resources especially should be viewed in the framework of the Flemish context where mastery of the IL is not only perceived by society as essential but is also the a priori condition for integration. Once parents in a society with a strong focus on the IL have acquired certain resources (such as a degree of higher education or IL proficiency)

they tend to loosen their efforts to maintain the HL (Crul et al., 2012; Nesteruk, 2010), as seems to be the case in our sample. IL proficiency could thus be viewed as a risk for HL maintenance, adding to the linguistic tension multilingual families are often subjected to. When introducing generation as a control variable, the statistical significance of resources decreases to borderline significant. This could be attributed to the correlation between social mobility (in the form of educational and linguistic resources) and migration generation, where the second generation has acquired more resources.

Limitations and recommendations

The relatively weak explanatory power of our models could be explained by the linguistic diversity of our sample and/or the use of a dichotomous HL maintenance efforts measure. However, we believe the present study is a valuable contribution to the field because we were in fact able to uncover significant, albeit weak, correlations and explain part of the variance in a large heterogeneous sample based on the theoretical framework of family language policy. A linguistically homogeneous sample, as used in most other similar studies (Hollebeke et al., 2020), might already improve the model fit and increase the strength of the correlations, as could a linear Likert scale measuring parental HL exposure efforts. In addition, further research could go more deeply into questioning specific efforts (e.g., literacy activities, HL classes...) and parents' incentives. We also recommend examining whether the inclusion of (additional) variables pertaining to other domains than the family (e.g., cultural, societal, socio-economic...) could better explain the variance. Qualitative research could guide the improvement of the scales and the search for other explanatory variables. Furthermore, while families are continuously susceptible to internal and external changes, persistent and consistent HL use by the parents is a condition for successful HL maintenance (Pauwels, 2005). We, therefore, recommend a longitudinal mixed-method approach to shed light on families' motivations or alterations in families' language policy or HL maintenance efforts. Lastly, while we believe our sample largely reflects the Flemish population and the societal focus on Dutch, there might be a slight bias towards highly educated and highly Dutch proficient families. It would be particularly interesting to replicate our study with a focus on families that lack linguistic and educational resources, as these families might be more sensitive towards how society perceives them (Zhang, 2012) and more dependent on professional advice steering them towards the IL.

Conclusion

This study explores several factors within and beyond the family that might prompt parents to attempt maximizing their child's HL exposure. We treated FLP, advice from ECCE professionals and other sources, and educational and linguistic resources as independent variables. In addition, we introduced migration generation as a control variable. Notwithstanding the linguistic diversity of our sample, we did uncover statistical, albeit weak, correlations. Firstly, our results uncover management as the strongest predictor of HL maintenance effort, irrespective of family resources and received advice. Moreover,

conscious management seems to favour HL maintenance, even though the scale we used measures language-independent efforts. Furthermore, the weak positive correlation between HL maintenance efforts and advice from other sources than ECCE professionals could support the suggestion that parents are selective when following advice and often rely on the potentially HL-oriented advice from other sources for reassurance. Lastly, we found that resources are weakly negatively related to parental HL maintenance efforts. The more educational and linguistic resources parents have at their disposal, the less likely they are to try and transmit the HL to their children. We hope this study offers a better comprehension of what could motivate parents to transmit the HL, maybe leading to better parental support in HL maintenance. Pointing out the potential effect of conscious management efforts and guiding parents in their FLP-shaping process, for instance, might already be a leg up in HL maintenance.

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Appendix 1 Descriptive statistics for separate scale items measuring children's language exposure at home

Item	Mean	Range
Language spoken most with the child by parents	0.68	0-1
Language spoken most with the child by siblings	0.46	0-1
Language spoken most with the child by grandparents	0.78	0-1
Language spoken most by parents amongst themselves	0.73	0-1
Child's overall exposure at home as estimated by the respondent	0.63	0-1

0 = monolingual Dutch, 1 = monolingual HL

Appendix 2 Descriptive statistics for separate scale items measuring parental beliefs in a multilingual advantage

Item	Agree	Disagree
Multilingual children do better at school than monolingual children.	45%	55%
Multilingual children make friends more easily than monolingual children.	47.4%	52.6%
Multilingual children have a stronger bond with their family than monolingual children.	26.5%	73.5%
Multilingual children are more confident than monolingual children.	33.8%	66.2%

Appendix 3 Descriptive statistics for separate scale items measuring parental conscious management

Item	Agree	Disagree
The other parent and I discussed what language(s) we want to raise our child in.	78.7%	21.3%
Our family has clear agreements on the language(s) we use.	65.9%	34.1%
I am conscious of the language(s) I use at home.	82.7%	17.3%