

## Exploring the Language Policy of a Turkish-Greek Transnational Family in the UK

Birleşik Krallıktaki Türk-Yunan Ulusötesi Bir Ailenin Dil Politikasının İncelenmesi

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doi 10.54316/dilarastirmalari.1481410

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doi 10.54316/dilarastirmalari.1481410

### Atıf

#### Citation

Ay Kaya, Elif; Yaman, İsmail  
(2025). Exploring the  
Language Policy of a  
Turkish-Greek Transnational  
Family in the UK. *Dil  
Araştırmaları*, 36: 89-105.

### Başvuru

#### Submitted

09.05.2024

### Revizyon

#### Revised

07.08.2024

### Kabul

#### Accepted

21.10.2024

### Çevrimiçi Yayın

#### Published Online

12.05.2025

Bu makale en az iki hakem tarafından incelenmiş ve makalede intihal bulunmadığı teyit edilmiştir.

This article has been reviewed by at least two referees and confirmed to be free of plagiarism.

### Öz

This study aims to ascertain the family language policies of a multilingual and transnational family in the United Kingdom (UK) concerning their efforts to pass down their heritage languages to their children within the framework of the theories proposed by Spolsky (2004). The paper simultaneously makes an effort to draw attention to their children's attitudes, preferences, and identities towards their heritage languages (Turkish-Greek) and the dominant language, English. To this end, a case study research design was used to get deep insights into this family's language views, practices, and language management techniques, as well as to present an in-depth analysis of the problem. The case of study included a Turkish-Greek transnational family living in the UK and the data were obtained through online semi-structured interviews with the family members. The findings reveal that the family's language ideologies were in accordance with their language practices and management strategies. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that family language policies are not the sole factor in successfully shaping children's multilingual development as the effects of sibling interaction, child agency, and formal schooling are also of great importance.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Family language policy, Greek, heritage languages, transnational families, Turkish.

### ABSTRACT

Bu çalışma, Spolsky'nin (2004) önerdiği teoriler çerçevesinde, Birleşik Krallıkta yaşayan çokdilli ve ulusötesi bir ailenin, ana dillerini çocuklarına aktarma çabalarına ilişkin aile dil

politikalarını tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma aynı zamanda bu ailenin ana dillerine (Türkçe-Yunanca) ve baskın dil İngilizce'ye ilişkin tutumlarına, tercihlerine ve benliklerine dikkat çekmektedir. Bu amaçla, ailenin dillere ilişkin görüşleri, uygulamaları ve yönetim teknikleri hakkında bilgi edinmek ve sorunun derinlemesine bir analizini sunmak için araştırma tasarımı olarak durum çalışması kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın durumu Birleşik Krallıkta yaşayan Türk-Yunan ulusötesi bir aileyi kapsamaktadır ve veriler aile üyeleriyle yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış çevrimiçi görüşmeler yoluyla elde edilmiştir. Bulgular, ailenin dil ideolojilerinin, dil uygulamaları ve yönetim stratejileriyle uyumlu olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca sonuçlar, aile dil politikalarının çocukların çok dilli gelişimini başarılı bir şekilde şekillendirmede tek faktör olmadığını, kardeş etkileşiminin, çocuk inisiyatifinin ve örgün eğitimin etkisinin de büyük önem taşıdığını göstermektedir.

**Keywords:** Aile Dil Politikası, Miras Diller, Türkçe, Ulusötesi Aileler, Yunanca.

## 0. Introduction

Multilingualism and transnationalism continue to exist around the world due to globalization (Duff, 2015). The United Kingdom is no exception and it hosts a growing number of transnational and multilingual families as demonstrated by statistics. According to the most current census of England and Wales in 2021, the number of non-UK-born residents has climbed to 10.0 million (16.8%), a 2.5 million increase from 2011 (Office of National Statistics, 2023). The census additionally revealed that the major language varied within partnerships (534,000) in 2.2% of 24.8 million households across England and Wales in 2021 (Office of National Statistics, 2023). In these transnational and multilingual households, parents have to deal with decisions on the linguistic raising of their children, which impacts their family language policies (Hollebeke et al., 2020). The most challenging choice for transnational families associated with this issue may be deciding which language will be the main language utilized inside their family. Choosing which languages to speak to the family can be highly contentious when both parents are foreign nationals from two distinct countries since it might affect the children's interactions with each parent's relatives abroad (Wilson, 2020). Some families may prefer using their heritage languages while others choose the dominant language of the country or a learned language (Hirsch-Lee, 2018).

Over the last two decades, scholars have paid close attention to research on the emerging family language strategies within transnational and multilingual families (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2023; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; Hua - Wei, 2016; Moustauoui Srhir, 2020; Ntetsika et al., 2022). To gain deeper insights into the family language policies, most of the previous studies integrated an examination of language ideology, practice, and management—all of which Spolsky (2004) classified as elements of the language policy model concerning a speech community (Schwartz - Verschik, 2013). Similarly, the current paper employs the same language policy model by Spolsky (2004) to understand the

family language policy of a multilingual and transnational family residing in the United Kingdom.

A family language policy (FLP) is an intentional effort to implement certain literacy and language use behaviors among members of the family and within home settings and it is determined by what the family feels will best fulfill and encourage the members' aspirations in life as well as enhance the family's social standing (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). On the other hand, FLP is also defined as both visible and invisible language planning for family members (King et al., 2008). Although the concept of one person, one language (OPOL), which was first presented in the book of French linguist Grammont in 1902 as an efficient method of managing bilingual acquisition, is where the history of FLP research begins (Wilson, 2020), currently, the majority of FLP research have focused on transnational and multilingual homes and communities where parents speak various native languages in an attempt to comprehend the potential causes of language maintenance and loss across generations (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018). Accordingly, a large body of work in FLP is based on the theoretical model developed by Spolsky (2004), which is composed of three interconnected components: language ideology- the way family members interpret various languages, language practices: “de facto language use”: the actual ways in which individuals use language; and language management- the measures people take to preserve a language (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018, p. 421). Given that families engage with others in various sociolinguistic, socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and sociocultural settings (Spolsky, 2004), it is crucial to comprehend how FLP interacts dynamically with its surroundings (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018). Curdt-Christiansen (2018) presents a theoretical framework to illustrate how language socialization in external settings affects FLP.

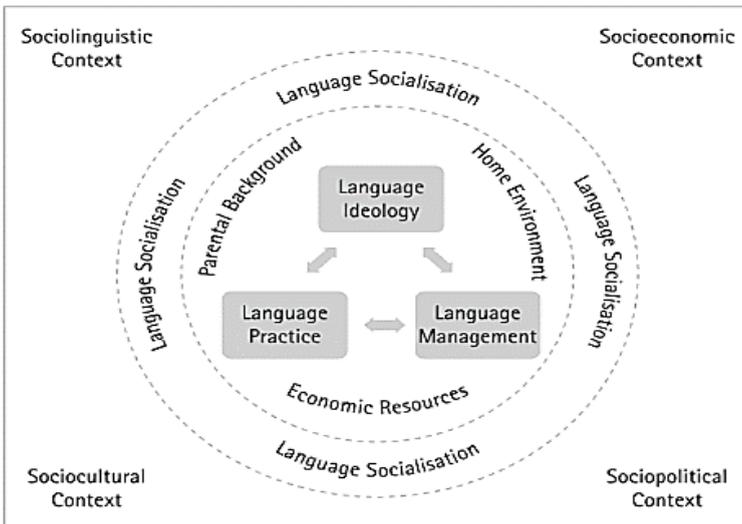


Figure 1. Interdisciplinary framework of family language policy (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018, p.422)

According to this theory as seen in Figure 1, the inner circle stands for the three pillars of FLP; so, the values that family members attach to particular languages play a major role in determining which languages are appropriate to practice and promote. The educational background, financial situation, and migration experiences of the families may have an impact on their parenting attitudes. Furthermore, these families continually engage with others in various social circumstances, and in the process of language socialization, this contact occurs through the mediational role of language (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018). As a result, FLP is impacted by closely related internal and external elements that also serve as the foundation for language usage and practices at home (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009).

Multilingualism and transnationalism are the other factors that affect language use and acquisition procedures, education paths, and the sense of belonging that people and families establish (Ntetsika et al., 2022). According to Hirsch and Lee (2018), “language learning, language acquisition, and language maintenance or loss” are possibly some of the noticeable and significant procedures of transnationalism (p.885). Transnational families are defined as families that spend a significant amount of time apart, manage to stay together, and foster a sense of collective well-being and solidarity despite living on different continents (Bryceson - Vuorela, 2002). Though in many cultures, the term "family" refers to the immediate family, which consists of parents and children, it can also refer to extended family, which includes grandparents and other important relatives (Hirsch - Lee, 2018). As Schmalzbauer (2004) stated, transnational families are not a new phenomenon, but there are important distinctions between the earlier types and the ones that emerged in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. To illustrate, thanks to online social networks, physical boundaries and distance no longer provide the same level of restriction on mobility, interaction, assembly, return, or reverse migration as they did even ten years ago (Lam, 2008).

Multilingual and transnational families may experience significant language modifications in their identities due to their physical separation from their home countries (Duff, 2015). These family language policy decision-making procedures and objectives are guided by the initial anticipated length of the transfer as well as the short- and long-term settling plans (Hirsch - Lee, 2018). In many multilingual and transnational families, the responsibility of maintaining and passing down their heritage languages to their kids is attributed to the mothers. Though it is suggested by researchers that teachers should embrace diversity in the classroom by allowing opportunities for linguistic and cultural demonstrations that can make students feel proud of their background and make them want to speak their heritage language more (Revis, 2019), even minority-background instructors in UK public schools had the view that heritage language development is a family duty and should be handled privately (Cunningham, 2020). Therefore, mothers are reported to implement different transnational strategies to develop their children’s heritage language maintenance. For instance, Kwon (2017) investigated the language beliefs and practices of mothers who immigrated from Japan and Korea to the United States and reported that they shared their strategies

as using international media to inspire HL learning and provide cultural understanding, regular trips back to the children's native countries so they can attend public schools, and making use of print and literacy tools brought into HL from their native nations. Similarly, Gogonas and Maligkoudi (2022) explored the Czech mothers' language ideologies and management practices in Greece, and they discovered that increasing their kids' fluency in the language by introducing them to Czech literature, encouraging them to use social media to keep their international network of friends and family in the Czech Republic alive, speaking only Czech with them and sending them to the complementary schools were the main efforts that the Czech transnational mothers made. Moreover, in a recent study carried out among 470 transnational families across the UK by Curdt-Christiansen et al. (2023), it was reported that most families choose to schedule regular trips back to their own country and keep in touch with relatives virtually. Furthermore, this study yielded that even though parents thought it was advantageous to teach their children heritage languages, most stated they lacked the time and resources to fully immerse their kids in the subject.

Previous studies highlight that children's competency in heritage language is positively impacted by their parental practices and management efforts to improve children's competency in that language and being exposed to more heritage does not harm these children's proficiency in the majority language (Hollebeke et al., 2020). However, school-aged siblings may influence language balance in the home and contribute to the majority language used in the dominant culture by speaking it themselves and by increasing their mother's use of that language (Bridges - Hoff, 2014; Obied, 2009). On the other hand, notwithstanding their language practices and management to maintain the heritage language, parents may need to modify their language use to suit their child's preferences in situations where a kid exhibits resistance and outright disinterest in speaking their heritage languages (Kheirkhah - Cekaite, 2015; Kheirkhah - Cekaite, 2018; Mirvahedi - Hosseini, 2023). Hence, comprehending family language policy holds significant importance in understanding children's language development as well as their academic achievements and, in a broader sense, the preservation of minority languages in an increasingly interconnected world (Fogle - King, 2013). Nevertheless, family language policies are not only affected by parental language management as the child is an important factor that shapes the strategies of their families through their identity choices (Fogle, 2009; Gafaranga, 2011; Fogle - King, 2013). While the literature mainly concentrates on parental ideologies and practices, the agency or impact of children appears to be studied less often (Hollebeke, et al., 2020) as few studies deal with this issue from both the parents and the children's perspectives. Likewise, Wilson (2020) emphasizes that more research into the viewpoints of kids from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds—including heritage languages whose minority language is viewed as low status—is required to expand our understanding of the experiences of bilingual kids in the UK. In this sense, the current study aims to investigate the family language policies of multilingual and transnational families in the UK setting, as well as to determine the children's attitudes, preferences, and practices both inside and outside their homes regarding their family's language policies, heritage languages,

and dominant language. Therefore, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the beliefs and practices of a Turkish-Greek transnational family living in the UK regarding the languages used in their family?
2. What kind of language management strategies does this transnational family implement for their children's language development?
3. What are the attitudes of their children regarding their language practices in various communicational settings?

## 1. Methodology

### 1.1. Research Design

The design of the current research included a case study which is a qualitative method in which the investigator examines a case or numerous cases over time using extensive, in-depth data gathering through observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports (Creswell, 2007). Yin (2009) argues that while it may appear challenging to draw universal conclusions from a single case study, the goal of case studies is to apply to theoretical foundations rather than to populations or worlds. Moreover, case studies based on interviews are one of the most common research in the field of language users in transnational backgrounds since with adequate contextualization and depth, this approach may be able to provide light on the practices, beliefs, conflicts, circumstances, and problems that a limited group of chosen transnational people and families may encounter in relation to language (Duff, 2015).

### 1.2. Participants

The participant family of this study was selected through a purposive sampling strategy. Purposive sampling is the act of choosing units (people, organizations, etc.) with the explicit goal of addressing the research objectives of a study (Creswell, 2009; Teddlie - Tashakkori, 2009). Therefore, it is crucial to develop a rationale for selecting the case(s) that may be representative of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the case was defined as “multilingual families’ language policy in the UK context”. Four criteria guided the selection of the participant family: 1) being a multilingual family living in the UK, 2) having one parent who is a native Turkish speaker 3) having a school-aged kid(s) 4) wishing to pass down their heritage languages to their children. Based on these criteria, a Turkish-Greek multilingual and transnational family living in the UK was reached through a family friend and was selected as the participant family as they met the aforementioned criteria. This family has two children and the information regarding family members’ age, country of birth, languages, occupation, and the length of their stay in the UK are presented in Table 1 below. To ensure confidentiality, participants are referred to by pseudonyms.

Table 1. Demographic information about the participant family

Participants	Age	Country of Birth	Languages	Occupation	Length of the stay in the UK
Bora (Husband)	32	Türkiye	Turkish, English, Greek, Arabic, Finnish, Spanish	Civil Engineer	6 years
Pepe (Wife)	36	Greece	Turkish, English, Greek, Bulgarian, German	Dentist	5 years
Ömer (Son)	9	Bulgaria	Turkish, Greek, English	Student (Primary School)	5 years
Sarp (Son)	5	Finland	English, Turkish, Greek	Student (Kindergarten)	5 years

Bora, a 32-year-old civil engineer, has accumulated extensive transnational experiences throughout his life. Born in Istanbul, Türkiye, he completed his primary and secondary education in his hometown. Due to his father's employment, Bora acquired Arabic language skills during childhood and attended part of his high school education in Libya. He then returned to Türkiye independently to complete high school before pursuing a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering at Sofia Technical University in Bulgaria, where he also met his future wife. After graduating, Bora's career allowed him to live in various countries, including nearly a year in Algeria and almost two years in Finland. Pepe, a 36-year-old dentist, was born in Thessaloniki, Greece, to grandparents who had immigrated from Türkiye. She earned her degree in dentistry from the same university as her spouse, Bora, and is proficient in five languages. Intending to start a family from the outset, Pepe and Bora took the opportunity to teach each other Turkish and Greek, further enhancing their language skills through interactions with their university friends from both linguistic backgrounds. After completing her university education, Pepe worked in dental clinics and participated in various projects under UNESCO. Over the past five years, however, she has not been actively employed, which has allowed her to devote significant attention to her children and make substantial contributions to their multilingual upbringing.

Ömer, the older son, is 10 years old and arrived in the UK when he was 5. He was born in Bulgaria and then moved to Greece with her mother when her father had to be away for his job. Before enrolling in a kindergarten in Greece, where he was able to practice his Greek with his peers and acquire much more, Ömer grew up hearing both Turkish and Greek from his mother. At the age of 5, Ömer arrived in the UK with her mother and his sibling to start a new life since her father got a new job there. Following their arrival, he began to learn English due to his school education. Now, he can fluently speak Turkish, English, and Greek. On the other hand, Sarp was born in Finland, where his family had settled because of his

father's job. However, he lived there for nearly two years before moving to the UK in 2019. He possesses the ability to fluently express his thoughts and opinions in English. Though he is not fluent in Greek and Turkish now, he can understand those languages and can express himself in a limited way.

### **1.3. Data Collection and Analysis**

The data was collected through a semi-structured interview conducted in a digital environment using Zoom videoconferencing. The study by Ojha (2020) served as the basis for the interview questions. Unlike the study of Ojha (2020), which was conducted with a bilingual Nepali family living in the United States, the current study focused on a Turkish-Greek multilingual family living in the UK. Thus, without altering the original interview questions, a few small adjustments were made to some questions about heritage languages, country names, and being multilingual instead of being bilingual. The permission to adapt and use the questions was obtained from the researcher through email. During data collection, the interview was performed individually with the mother and father because the mother and children were in Greece for Christmas celebrations while the father remained in the UK for work. The interview was conducted in Turkish at the participants' request as they felt competent in Turkish, yet, for some questions the researcher translated the questions into English for the mother and the older child to comprehend clearly. Beginning with demographic data, the mother and the father were questioned about their personal and family background, life path, arrival in the UK, and language profiles of the family members. Then, around thirty questions related to their family language policy were posed to the parents. On the other hand, twelve questions were directed at their older son regarding his language practices and perceptions. Since their second child is too young to comprehend the queries, their parents provided the information regarding his linguistic habits and disposition. All the interviews lasted for a total of 6 hours and were subsequently transcribed and translated into English by the author. Thematic analysis that requires a strategy for detecting, analyzing, and decoding meaning patterns (Clarke - Braun, 2017) in qualitative data was used to analyze the data. The themes were defined based on the research questions and they were categorized into language ideologies, language practices, and language management strategies. The themes to which the responses linked were broached to expert judgment.

## **2. Findings**

### **2.1. Parental Language Ideologies and Practices**

The first question of the current study aimed to reveal the language ideologies and the language practices of the Turkish-Greek transnational family. The interview findings showed that both of the parents are willing to transmit their heritage languages to their children and accordingly, they put efforts into developing their language repertoires. The parent's desire for his kids to understand their background and maintain ties to their culture and ancestors is the major motivator

for teaching heritage languages. They stress the necessity of being able to communicate in the same language as their grandparents to form strong bonds during family visits. The father also wishes his kids' education to continue unhindered by linguistic barriers in the event that he changes his job and eventually returns to Türkiye. In a similar vein, the parent believes that having multiple language skills will open up new career options for his kids and expand one's social horizon by improving interpersonal communication. The significance of acquiring heritage languages is further highlighted by the fathers' belief that marrying someone from a similar culture would be better for their children's future. Their ideas can be seen as follows:

I want my kids to speak Greek and Turkish like a native speaker of both languages. I don't want them to have a poor accent in any manner. I want them to be aware of and linked to their roots and culture because I think that a person who is familiar with their culture would eventually wish to live in it, and I don't want my kids to experience linguistic difficulties when that time comes...Also, now, we can take them to their hometowns, yet at 16 or 17, I can't make them do these things. Instead, they would just walk out the door. It's our responsibility to teach them heritage languages now so that when they're older, they can look back and say, "Dad, you pushed us a lot, but God bless you, we don't have any trouble talking to anyone when we go to Greece or Türkiye." (Father)

Maybe they will get an education, work, or get married in Türkiye or Greece in the future and that's why, they should be competent in both Turkish and Greek languages. (Mother)

Regarding the parental language practices, the findings revealed that the mother spoke both Turkish and Greek to her firstborn kid in Greece before they moved in together, allowing the child to become fluent in both languages. Upon moving in with their father, the mother spoke only Greek to the boy while the father spoke only Turkish by using the one-parent, one-language approach. They expressed that they managed to become successful in raising their first child bilingually in this way. However, when their second son was born, they realized that this strategy was ineffective for him since they lived in a place where a different language was spoken outside the home, resulting in a third language for children, and because he had an older sibling. Since the second child was slow to adjust to this approach and delayed in beginning to speak, they recognized they needed to forsake this strategy and consult a speech therapist:

Sarp's speech was delayed. He was 4 years old, but he couldn't talk correctly; he would begin a sentence in English and end it in Turkish, or half in Greek and half in Turkish. We decided to take him to a doctor. The doctor advised us to communicate with him in whichever language he feels comfortable expressing himself in and whichever language he wishes to speak, without forcing him. Because Sarp preferred to communicate in English, I began speaking English with him more frequently. (Mother)

The reason is that Sarp started school here, he speaks English all the time, and I am always outdoors. Now the critical point is here that there is someone who

speaks English at home: his brother, Ömer. Regardless of how many times I urge them not to speak English at home, they always switch to it when playing games. (Father)

The mother explained the reason why she changed her approach to passing down their heritage languages to his younger son as follows:

Ömer was a gifted child who picked up languages quickly. Whatever you taught him, he absorbed and was constantly seeking more. At nine years old, he is fluent in Turkish, Greek, and English and has a rapid code-switch. I began teaching my young son Sarp at the same pace and method since I assumed he would be the same, but I noticed that there are two machines, and they function extremely differently. One is fast, whereas the other is significantly slower. So, I understood I needed to take it a little slowly with language transmission. At the same time, Sarp, like me, is a little timid, so he is worried about expressing himself incorrectly when speaking Turkish and Greek, so he always asks if this is how we express it before speaking. Ömer was not like that; even if he had made a mistake, he would have continued talking and attempting fresh lines to get his point across. (Mother)

Furthermore, the family believes that no matter how hard they try to keep and develop their heritage languages, their children have to interact with people in English all the time because of school and the environment they live in, making the process even more difficult for them because as parents, they are the only ones who can speak Turkish and Greek to their children. The father is also disappointed that their Turkish or Greek-origin friends and neighbours raise their children by speaking English rather than preserving heritage languages. This situation is believed to prevent their children from socializing with their neighbours' children in heritage languages. On the other hand, regarding learning the dominant language, which is English in our context, both parents believe that it is a must to learn English fluently for every individual living in the UK as it is the official language and necessary for both state affairs and everyday communication, to put it simply, everywhere. According to the father:

Some people have been here for twenty years, but they still can't talk, and some ask me to translate official documents because they can't read them. I believe that we have an obligation to the state if we live here, work here, and appreciate this nation. It's as easy as that: if you don't speak this language, board an aircraft and return to your homeland! Thus, in addition to your native tongue, you need to learn the local tongue in which you reside. (father)

## 2.2. Language Management Strategies

The findings concerning the second question demonstrate that this family has a number of language management strategies. As they have no support available for their children's development in heritage languages, and there has never been such a case with their relatives before, the parents themselves take all required precautions and attempt to provide all possible opportunities for their children's development in Turkish and Greek. Their support for children consists of

organizing video calls with grandparents, watching Greek and Turkish movies at home, listening to Turkish radio channels while traveling, teaching them songs, reading Turkish and Greek stories to children, using flashcards and activity books, and organizing long-term family visits. They also state that they applied one parent one language method. The father explains this situation:

We received no advice on parenting plurilingual children because we were the first in our family to do so. I had the opportunity to look on the internet, but everything I read recommended leaving the children free and letting them speak whatever they wanted. No, I believe this is impossible because our family is bilingual and we live in a country where a third language is spoken outside. If I don't force my children, they will be unable to communicate in both of my languages. That is why we stayed with one parent, one language, and each parent communicated with the children in their own language. (Father).

Furthermore, the family deliberately prefers not to live in the Turkish neighborhood in London as they believe it does not contribute to their children's English development when children frequently interact with people in Turkish. In their interview, they expressed that they do not expect the school to support them in promoting the heritage languages as they are aware that it is impossible to perform this in a school where the majority of the students come from different ethnic backgrounds and there are lots of minority languages. Though the parents followed a common language management strategy from the beginning, it seems that the delayed speech of the younger son and the future plans of the mom brought about the disparity in the language practices of the parents. The mother explains the reason why she adopts a more flexible approach for their children, as follows:

I used to be more concerned with the development of heritage languages, but not longer, because I know we will never return, neither in Türkiye nor in Greece...So, I let them communicate in any language they want, in whatever language they are most comfortable with... But Bora isn't like that; he's still strict and warns kids not to speak English at home unless necessary. (mother)

When parents were asked about their wishes related to their children's language use in the future, they said:

I don't care what languages they speak when they hit 17-18 years old, but I would like them to continue speaking our languages at home, no matter what they speak outside, at least in the home where I am. (father)

As I will respond to them in Greek regardless of what language they speak, I don't care much about whatever language they prefer in the future. (mother)

### **2.3. The Child's Perceptions of His Family's Language Policy**

The interview was conducted only with the older son of the family. During the interview, it was understood that Ömer (9), the older son of the family, was quite aware of the reason for his family's language practices and management strategies. This can be seen in the following excerpt:

I can speak Greek, Turkish, and English yet we do not speak English at home because if we continue to speak English at home, this causes us not to speak Turkish and Greek fluently and accurately, thus, we cannot improve ourselves in those languages. We only speak in English at home when we have homework to complete. (Ömer)

When he was asked about his feelings toward English and his heritage languages. He expressed himself as:

When I speak in English, I feel myself at school as English is the school's language. I don't like English very much. It is of no importance to me. However, school is important for me to pass my classes and graduate and therefore, I need to know and speak English. When I graduate from school, I can continue my education or start my job in Greece, Türkiye, or another country yet not in the UK because it is beautiful but the forecast here is not for me. I like the sun and the sea and I like speaking Greek very much. I feel secure and I feel at home when speaking Greek. I wish I could speak Greek and Turkish with my brother, as well but I have to speak in English to him as he feels more comfortable with English.

Ömer also expressed that he longed for the kindergarten that he attended in Greece and his classmates. He stated that he would have preferred attending a heritage language school in the UK, given the opportunity, and he regretted that his school did not have any Greek or Turkish students. Ömer's reflections suggest a strong desire to socialize within the Turkish and Greek communities, as he fondly recalled his experiences and envisioned spending part of his future in these countries. Regarding the ways to improve the heritage languages, he said:

I want to improve my Turkish and Greek and therefore, I would like to enroll in a Greek or Turkish school to learn how to pronounce words and read and write in those languages. I know the Turkish and the Greek alphabets but I cannot combine the letters.

### 3. Discussion

The results of the study on the family's language ideologies showed that the father in particular felt that the family should be in charge of maintaining their children's heritage language and culture for a number of reasons, such as maintaining strong transnational family ties, educating their kids about their identities and origins, the possibility of moving back to their hometown, and potential career opportunities. This perspective aligns with Cunningham's (2020) findings, where UK public school teachers also viewed preserving heritage languages as the family's duty. Furthermore, this implies that the participant family identifies strongly with their heritage language and culture because they have high regard for their linguistic and cultural identities. This finding is in tune with Park and Sarkar's (2007) study of Korean immigrant parents in Montreal in terms of their desire to maintain and develop their children's heritage language so that their children can keep their cultural identity, have better economic opportunities and

increase their communication strategies with their extended families. It can be concluded that transnational parents are willing to support their children's heritage language maintenance and development (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2023; Ojha, 2020; Park - Sarkar, 2007). Evidence from the current study also demonstrates that parents' ideologies toward the upbringing of multilingual children are quite positive as they believe that being multilingual will open up additional chances for their kids in both cultural and economic situations. Therefore, they place equal emphasis on their children's English development as much as their heritage languages. As Curdt-Christiansen (2009) notes, the language beliefs of transnational families are influenced by socio-economic issues, such as education and career prospects. Additionally, parental attitudes towards English and the benefits of plurilingualism may stem from their own experiences growing up plurilingual. This reflects Curdt-Christiansen's theory (2018), which posits that language ideologies are influenced by the parental background. Furthermore, the positive perspective of the family toward multilingual child-rearing is supported by the previous findings of a study with Chinese immigrant parents in Quebec (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2009). The Chinese parents reported that developing multilingual proficiency in different languages such as English and French is vital to their children due to the market values of these languages in socio-political and socio-linguistic contexts. This underscores the complexity of FLP and the need to consider the broader social, economic, cultural, and political factors that shape family language choices (Spolsky, 2004).

The findings on the language practices and language management strategies illustrated that the language ideologies of the participant family were mostly matched with their language practices since the family paid attention to speaking to their children in their heritage languages mostly and exposed them to their native languages and the culture through various strategies. Nevertheless, this finding is contrary to the prior research by Ojha (2020) since it represented conflicting ideologies and practices of Nepali families residing in the US. According to his findings, despite their desire to preserve their ancestral language for their children, the Nepali parents were unable to provide their kids with the opportunity to acquire Nepali, and their language preferences in family interactions did not align with their claims. In contrast to the conflicting ideologies and practices found in the literature, this study indicates that the participant family implemented lots of strategies to maintain their heritage languages including organizing regular visits to native countries, benefitting from virtual contacts, and using international media to inspire HL learning and provide cultural understanding, making use of literacy tools and using only the heritage languages in family interactions which is corroborated by the previous findings (Curdt-Christiansen et al., 2023; Gogonos - Maligkoudi, 2022; Kwon, 2017). Furthermore, the family's deliberate choice to reside in a community with a relatively low population of Turkish and Greek individuals, along with their commitment to learning the language of their host country, demonstrates their prioritization of their children's English proficiency, in addition to their efforts to preserve their heritage languages. It highlights the dynamic interplay between

management, practices, and ideologies in shaping language use within families as Spolsky (2004) put forward. It can be concluded that these language management strategies helped the older child use both the heritage languages and the dominant language fluently and the family efforts could be fruitful in raising plurilingual children.

Nonetheless, the results also suggest that FLP may not be the only factor that is critical in shaping children's plurilingual development as the younger child preferred to speak in English by resisting his heritage languages after his delayed speech. This discovery corroborates the findings of Obied (2009), which determined that younger siblings exhibit reluctance in using the minority language, whereas older siblings demonstrate the ability to use both languages interchangeably inside the household. His parents believe that this delayed speech stemmed from his perplexity about the variety of languages he had encountered. While their elder child was raised only in Turkish and Greek until a specific age and was able to enroll in a Greek kindergarten to further his Greek language skills at home and school, their younger child was born in Finland and then relocated to the UK, where he was raised being exposed to three distinct languages. Considering the findings, heritage language transmission is more challenging in multilingual environments compared to a bilingual context. This finding supports evidence from previous studies (Kheirkhah - Cekaite, 2015; Mirvahedi - Hosseini, 2023). The younger child's agency in language practices appeared to influence his parents' engagement in code-switching and they also allowed him to practice English more often as he felt more comfortable in that language. It can be concluded that even young children can influence parental behaviors during everyday encounters, substantially affecting the language policies inside a household (Fogle - King, 2013). Besides, the parents thought that the effect of school education and his older sibling could be the other reasons that caused him to prefer English over heritage languages. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field (e.g., Bridges - Hoff, 2014; Kheirkhah - Cekaite, 2018; Obied, 2009; Ojha, 2020). The employment of a dominant language as the medium of instruction in formal schooling leads to a decline or loss of proficiency in the heritage language, as it prioritizes the growth of the dominant language and results in subtractive bilingualism (Ojha, 2020). This provides further proof that formal education has an impact on the way children acquire their linguistic skills. In addition, as stated by Bridges and Hoff (2014), school-aged kids influence language use in multilingual homes by bringing the school language with them. Therefore, young toddlers in transnational families are exposed to the dominant language more and pick it up faster thanks to their older siblings. Similarly, the study by Kheirkhah and Cekaite (2018) that was conducted with five Iranian families living in Sweden shows the effect of siblings as agents in language socialization. The siblings supported each other's multilingual development in both heritage languages and the dominant languages by correcting their mistakes yet as they mostly interacted in Swedish, which they felt more comfortable with, their families followed a child-centered approach and allowed them to use Swedish more compared to their heritage

languages. According to research by Obied (2009), siblings contribute to shaping the linguistic environment in multilingual families and impact the balance of languages used at home. Consequently, families tend to adopt a more mixed approach gradually, using both languages at home depending on the topic and the child's needs. This reflects the findings of the current study regarding the family's mixed language use based on their younger son's needs. Therefore, inconsistencies and discrepancies in FLP are linked to parents' interpretations of their children's requirements, as suggested by Fogle (2009).

#### 4. Conclusion

This study highlights the intricate dynamics of language beliefs, practices, and management methods within transnational families. The participant family's language policy to preserve their heritage languages could exemplify a wider acknowledgment of the cultural, educational, and economic advantages of being plurilingual. Nevertheless, the difficulties encountered in preserving heritage languages, especially in multilingual environments, emphasize the significance of elements such as the child's agency, the influence of siblings, and the function of formal schooling. These findings reveal that although family language policies are important, they are not the sole determinants of successful plurilingual development. This study reinforces the importance of having a detailed understanding of how parental ideology, environmental factors, and children's preferences shape language outcomes in multilingual families.

All in all, echoing Hua and Wei (2016), it is crucial to understand transnational families' unique experiences, histories, emotions, and behaviors to create effective social policies and professional practices for their families. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that as only one family was interviewed in this study, the results presented here might not apply to all Turkish-Greek transnational families residing in the UK. Therefore, further studies are recommended to include a mixed methods research design to reach more sample families in the quantitative part. In addition, it may be beneficial for prospective studies to use a longitudinal design to create a full and precise representation of the lives of participants by identifying any changes that might take place over time. Last but not least, it is important to consider that variables such as the number of children in the family and alterations in the heritage languages spoken will also impact the processes that result in children acquiring or losing their heritage languages and, consequently, growing up multilingual upbringing. Therefore, prospective studies are advised to be carried out with families that have varying numbers of children and where one parent has Turkish and the other has a different heritage language.

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