Sociolinguistic Studies

ISSN: 1750-8649 (print)
ISSN: 1750-8657 (online)

Article

Family Language Policy in the minority and migration contexts of Cyprus: The issues of heritage language (incomplete) acquisition, use, attrition, maintenance, and transmission

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Abstract

This article investigates the Family Language Policy (FLP) of minority and immigrant families in Cyprus. The participants in our study were 30 immigrant and minority families in Cyprus with various first language (L1) backgrounds, namely, Russian, Georgian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Romanian, English, and Arabic and minority speakers of Armenian, Lebanese, and Pontic Greek. The data were collected via written questionnaires and oral, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a focus on the FLP, cultural and linguistic identities, heritage language (HL) (incomplete) acquisition, attrition, use maintenance and transmission, linguistic interaction patterns and the material culture at home. The analysis of the data revealed that minority and immigrant speakers in Cyprus had hybrid language and cultural identities, different perceptions regarding citizenship, inclusion, and belonging, as well as the attrition, use, maintenance, and transmission of the HL, which reflected their FLPs, agency, practices, and negotiations. They attempted to assimilate into the target society but also had strong links to the community of residence, to their L1 country, and to their heritage or home language. The participants also employed hybrid language practices, as they used mixed/multiple languages both in the home and outside it. Overall, they had a positive attitude towards multilingualism in Cyprus.

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SOLS VOL 18.1–2 2024 27–58 https://doi.org/10.1558/sols.24779

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https://utppublishing.com/doi/pdf/10.1558/sols.24779 - Tuesday, November 18, 2025 3:38:08 AM - UVI-FFT IP Address:193.146.45.80

KEYWORDS: Family Language Policy, second-generation immigrants and minority speakers, heritage language attrition, use, maintenance, and transmission, Cyprus

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1 Introduction

The development, use, maintenance, and transmission of the heritage language (HL) depend on Family Language Policy (FLP), on parental and child agency, and on the language choices, use and management practices at home, as well as social networks and education (Bohnacker, 2022). Immigrant or minority families live in the majority language (ML) environment; thus, children have more input in the ML via schooling and communication with their friends and peers (Hoff, Rumiche, Burridge, Ribot and Welsh, 2014). Without deliberate parental efforts to support the HL, language shift and loss may occur (Kheirkhah and Cekaite, 2018; Paradis, Soto-Corominas, Chen and Gottardo, 2020).

According to King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008: 907), FLP is 'explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home'. FLP practices can be implicit and covert (Fogle, 2013), and can be affected by emotions, identity, the impact of parental beliefs, strategies, and practices in home language maintenance and development, child agency, and socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors (Schwartz, 2020; Smith-Christmas, 2020).

As suggested by Spolsky's (2012) language policy model, the three components of language policy are language ideologies, language practices, and language management, which are related to intra-family and societal factors (Bezcioglu-Goktolga and Yagmur, 2022). The field of FLP deals with the ecology of the family and examines top-down and bottom-up factors which affect language planning in family homes, being shaped by the experiences of different generations (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018), and in particular in multilingual, heritage/immigrant families (King and Lanza, 2019). FLP is closely related to the larger sociocultural environment, the nexus of micro- and macrolevels, private and public spheres (Spolsky, 2012; Curdt-Christiansen, 2018). According to Smith-Christmas (2016, 2017), research on FLP in multilingual families has been conducted so far in three prototypical contexts such as OPOL (one person, one language), immigrant and autochthonous communities. A critical or decolonial approach to family multilingualism emphasises the role of social class, race, ethnicity, gender and migratory trajectories as well as affective dimensions, the sense of belonging to and construction of multilingual families in FLP research (Lomeu Gomes, 2018).

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The success of the HL transmission depends on both macro factors, such as the sociolinguistic, sociocultural, economic, and political environment of the families, and micro factors such as intra-family dynamics, FLP, parental efforts and expectations, attitudes, perceptions, affective domains, metalinguistic awareness, and language experience, as well as cultural and linguistic identities (Liu and Lin, 2019). The role of community or heritage language schools cannot be denied as they can provide an opportunity for minority and/or immigrant children to develop knowledge and literacy skills in their heritage/home language (Nordstrom, 2020).

This article seeks to add to the existing research on FLP, multilingualism and transnational families (e.g., King and Lanza, 2019; Selleck, 2022) and to enhance the dynamicity and scope of FLP as a field of study. It does so by investigating diverse language constellations with the focus on minority and immigrant families in the context of Cyprus and the lived experience of second-generation immigrants regarding HL (incomplete) acquisition, development, use, attrition, maintenance, and transmission by implementing a mixed-method approach to data collection and analysis and taking internal and external factors into consideration.

2 Previous research

2.1 FLP and HL attrition, use, maintenance, and transmission

Previous research on FLP is mainly qualitative in nature (e.g., Kopeliovich, 2010), but some researchers have implemented mixed-method and quantitative approaches in their data collection and analyses (e.g., Kaveh, 2018). Spolsky's tripartite framework (2012), with its focus on what family members believe about language, what they do with language, and what efforts they make to maintain language, was employed by various researchers in different contexts of the world (e.g., Revis, 2019).

Some researchers tried to shift the focus to family literacy research (Ren and Hu, 2013), parental beliefs about 'family, childhood and caregiving' (Fogle, 2013: 99), emotional aspects of FLP in multilingual families (Tannenbaum and Yitzhaki, 2016) and indigenous language revitalisation (Berardi-Wiltshire, 2017). Recent FLP research appears to contain the elements of language socialisation (Smith-Christmas, 2014), poststructural and phenomenological analyses of social space construction (Purkarthofer, 2019), as well as ethnographic approaches to language policy, critical and qualitative methods, with in-depth

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understandings of localised practices and broader social interpretations of the relation of language, not as a fixed category, and social reality (Lomeu Gomes, 2018; King and Lanza, 2019).

In this study, we investigated HL attrition or incomplete HL acquisition amongst second-generation immigrants in Cyprus. Specifically, we investigated whether their 'forgetting' or development of the L1 was related to the age of onset (AoO), the length of residence (LoR) in the country, schooling, the quality and quantity of input, HL use, types and domains of such use, and the maintenance and transmission by the first generation, their families, FLPs, Dominant Language Constellations (DLCs[1]), cultural and linguistic identities, and the sociolinguistic environment in the host community of Cyprus (Montrul and Polinsky, 2019; Brehmer and Treffers-Daller, 2020).

According to Köpke and Schmid (2004: 5), language attrition is 'the non-pathological decrease in a language that has previously been acquired by an individual'. Most of the studies of attrition consider the first language (L1) attrition of late sequential adult bilinguals (Schmid, 2013). Previous research has shown that children's L1 attrition in immigration settings is characterised by more severe cases of language attrition (for example, the loss of structural aspects in the L1) in comparison to adults (Schmid and Köpke, 2019). Even bilinguals with extensive access to the L1 until adulthood are judged as non-native L1 speakers by their monolingual peers due to their non-target-like production and comprehension of lexicon, morphosyntax, and phonology, as well as due to code-switching and code-mixing (Benmamoun, Montrul and Polinsky, 2013).

2.2 The sociolinguistic situation in Cyprus: Migration and multilingualism

The sociolinguistic situation in Cyprus can be characterised as multilingual because, in addition to the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, there are minorities who live in the country (such as Armenians, Latins and Maronites), residents of British origin, immigrants from various countries in the European Union, non-EU Eastern Europe and Asia and, particularly, from the former Soviet Union (Hadjioannou, Tsiplakou, and Kappler, 2011). Moreover, Greek Cypriots are considered to be bilectal (Grohmann, Papadopoulou, and Themistocleous, 2017) as they use two varieties, Standard Modern Greek (SMG) and Cypriot Greek (CG), which differ in the domain of use (formal versus informal) and status (high versus low), as well as in terms of phonetics, morphophonology, lexicon, and morphosyntax. With regard to

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the mainstream secondary education system, SMG is used at public Greek-speaking schools rather than the pupils' home variety as the latter is associated with inferior language status, negative stereotypes, and the view that it is an obstacle to academic success (Ioannidou, Karatsareas, Lytra, and Tsiplakou, 2020). There are also a variety of private Greek-, French-, English-, Russian-, and Armenian-speaking schools in Cyprus that educate local bilectal pupils, as well as bilingual, multilingual, minority, immigrant, and foreign students. With regard to tertiary education, there are public Greek-speaking universities and private Greek- and English-speaking universities. English is a global language that is widely used across the island for communication, education and business purposes (Buschfeld, 2013). It is the language of globalisation and technological development; CG has borrowed numerous words from English, and English-Greek code-switching is a common phenomenon in the country (Papapavlou and Satraki, 2013). Russian has recently gained the status of a new lingua franca on the island (Eracleous, 2015); it is not replacing English as the global language, but it has an important role in business and tourist spheres in the country.

Immigration to Cyprus has increased since 2004 when Cyprus became a member of the EU. According to the latest population census in 2011, more than 170,000 non-citizens reside in Cyprus in rural and urban areas, and only half of them come from the EU (for example, Greece, the UK, Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland), while the remainder are from non-EU countries such as the Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. In addition, since 2016, Cyprus has become home to a large number of refugees and asylum seekers from such countries and troubled areas like Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt (Gravani, Hatzopoulos, and Chinas, 2021).

Previous research on FLP in multilingual families in the context of Cyprus was focused mainly on Russian-speaking immigrant families and parental views and perceptions regarding home language use, maintenance, and transmission, translanguaging, and home literacy environment based on the analysis of ethnographic interviews and observations (Karpava, 2021; Karpava, Ringblom, and Zabrodskaja, 2021, 2022). The present study examined lived experiences and the views of the second-generation immigrants of different L1 backgrounds regarding FLP, HL (incomplete) acquisition, attrition, use, maintenance and transmission as well as cultural and linguistic identities.

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3 Methodology

The aim of the current study was to explore the effect of FLPs on the attrition, use, maintenance, and transmission of the HL by the second-generation minority and immigrant speakers of Russian, Georgian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Romanian, English, Arabic Armenian, Lebanese, and Pontic Greek in Cyprus. The following research questions were proposed:

1. What is the effect of the explicit and implicit FLP in immigrant and minority families in Cyprus on the development and support of the HL?
2. Is there any interrelation amongst linguistic and cultural identities, dominant language constellations (DLC) and the maintenance or attrition/incomplete acquisition of the HL?
3. What are the factors that affect the attrition, incomplete acquisition, use, maintenance, and transmission of the HL and the social inclusion of second-generation immigrants and minority groups from various L1 backgrounds in Cyprus?

3.1 Participants

The participants in our study were 30 second-generation immigrants in Cyprus from various L1 backgrounds, namely Russian, Georgian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Arabic, Polish, Albanian, Greek and English. Their ages ranged from 18 to 27 years (mean=22.6; SD=2.82); eight were male and 22 were female. Thirteen of the respondents were born in Cyprus, while the remainder had been exposed to Greek between the ages of 2 and 16 (AoO: Mean=3.73; SD=4.33). Overall, the duration of their residence in Cyprus ranged from 9 to 26 years (Mean=18.93, SD=4.98). The participants in Cyprus represented various urban and rural geographical areas. Snowball sampling and the convenience sampling technique were used to access the participants: In other words, an initial group of immigrant/minority participants was selected, who then indicated other potential participants who belonged to various immigrant/minority communities in Cyprus; see Table 1.

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Table 1. Participants.

N	L1	G	Age	CoB	LoR	AoO	LI	CI	SOC	LR	DMC
1	Romanian	F	20	R	14	6	R+G	R+G	FM	R+G+E	R+G+E
2	Bulgarian	F	20	B	10	10	B	B+CG	H	B+G+E+S+Rus	B+G+E
3	Lebanese	F	26	C	26	0	L+G	L+CG	H	L+G+E+F	L+G+E
4	Arabic	F	23	C	23	0	G	CG	FM	G+E+A	G+E
5	Russian	F	20	C	20	0	G+Rus	G+CG+Rus	FM	G+Rus+E+S	G+R+E
6	Ukrainian	F	21	Ukr	9	12	Rus+Ukr+G+E	Rus+CG	H	Rus+Ukr+G+E	Rus+G+E
7	Georgian	M	20	G	18	2	G+Rus+E	Ge+CG+Rus	H	G+Rus+E	G+Rus+E
8	Armenian	F	23	F	23	0	Ar+CG	Ar+CG	FM	Ar+E+G+F+Ger	Ar+E+G
9	Russian	F	19	C	19	0	G	G+Rus+CG	H	G+Rus+E	G+Rus+E
10	Arabic	F	22	C	22	0	G+A	G+A	FM	G+A+F+E	G+A+E
11	Russian	M	25	G	20	5	G+Rus	Rus	FM	Rus+G+E	Rus+G+E
12	Arabic	F	27	I	11	16	A	A	FM	A+E+G	A+E+G
13	Polish	M	25	C	25	0	P+CG	P+CG	H	P+CG+E	P+CG+E
14	Ukrainian	F	26	Ukr	16	10	Ukr+Rus+CG	Ukr+Rus+CG	H	Ukr+Rus+CG+E	Ukr+Rus+CG+E
15	Albanian	F	18	G	19	0	G+Alb	G+Alb	H	Alb+G+E+It	Alb+G+E
16	English	M	25	Eng	20	5	E+G+F+It	G+CG+It	H	E+G+F+It	E+G+F+It
17	English	F	23	C	23	0	E+G+A	E+CG+A+T+Rus	H	E+G+A+Rus	E+G+A+Rus
18	Greek	F	19	G	10	9	G+T+Rus+E	G	H	G+T+Rus+E+It	G+E+Rus
19	Romanian	F	18	R	10	8	R+E+G	R	H	R+E+G+S	R+E+G
20	Greek	F	25	G	21	4	G+E	G+E	H	G+E+S+It	G+E

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21	Greek	F	22	G	19	3	G+E	G	FM	G+E+It	G+E
22	Greek	F	22	G	18	4	G	G	H	G+E+Ger+F	G+E
23	English	F	18	C	18	0	CG+E	CG+E	H	CG+E+T	CG+G+E
24	Russian	M	25	G	19	6	G	G+ Rus	FM	G+Rus+E	G+Rus+E
25	Armenian	F	25	C	25	0	Ar+G	Ar+CG	FM	Ar+G+E+F	Ar+G+E
26	Russian	F	22	G	19	3	G+Rus+E	G	FM	Rus+G+E+S+It	G+Rus+E
27	Greek	F	27	G	23	4	G+E	G+CG	H	G+E+Ger	G+E
28	Russian	M	24	C	24	0	G+Rus+E	G+Rus+E	H	G+Rus+E+F	G+Rus+E
29	Georgian	M	23	G	18	5	Ge+Rus	Ge+Rus+G		Ge+Rus+G+E	Ge+Rus+G+E
30	Georgian	M	26	C	26	0	G+Rus	Rus		G+Rus+E+Ge+F	G+Rus+E

N=number; **L1**=native language; **G**=Gender; **CoB**=Country of birth; **LoR**=Length of residence in Cyprus; **AoO**=Age of onset to Greek; **LI**=Language identity; **CI**=Cultural identity; **SOC**=society; **LR**=linguistic repertoire; **DLC**=Dominant Language Constellation; **F**=female, **M**=male; **FM**=full member, I'm a full member of the society with equal rights; **H**=Hybrid: I belong to both this society and my home country society; **R**=Romania; **I**=Iraq; **P**=Polish; **B**=Bulgaria; **C**=Cyprus; **Eng**=England; **Ukr**=the Ukraine; **G**=Greece; **Ge**=Georgian; **Ar**=Armenian; **E**=English; **G**=Greek; **CG**=Cypriot Greek; **Ukr**=Ukranian; **Ger**=German; **T**=Turkish; **It**=Italian; **Alb**=Albanian; **B**=Bulgarian; **S**=Spanish; **Rus**=Russian; **A**=Arabic; **L**=Lebanese; **F**=French.

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3.2 Materials and procedures

The mixed methods research design was implemented in the research project, with the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and data analysis across the stages of the study, namely parallel mixed design (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The data were collected via written questionnaires (Schmid and Dusseldorp, 2010; Otwinowska-Kasztelanic and Karpava, 2015) and oral, in-depth, and semi-structured interviews with second-generation immigrants and minority speakers in Cyprus with various L1 backgrounds. The focus was on the FLPs, linguistic and cultural identities, the attrition, use, maintenance, and transmission of the HL, the linguistic interaction patterns and the material culture at home. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), questionnaires are employed "as research instruments for measurement purposes to collect valid and reliable data" (p. 3). The researcher tried to have a representative sample of the population under investigation (Iwaniec, 2020). The participants were able to choose whether they would like to fill in the questionnaire in Greek, English, or Russian. The analysis of the data was conducted in the relevant languages.

Oral, in-depth, and semi-structured interviews constitute a qualitative methodology. These types of interviews, which do not employ a question-response structure, provide an in-depth participant perspective. They also offer a selection of themes and topics, as well as of the ordering and wording of the questions, while eliminating the possibility of interviewer influence. The interviews allowed us to shed light on what was observed in the questionnaire answers and to have a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied (Prior, 2018). The interview questions were based on the results of a large-scale questionnaire (see more in Karpava, Ringblom and Zabrodskaja, 2018, 2019), with a focus on the participants' socioeconomic backgrounds, their language and cultural identities, HL attrition, use, maintenance and transmission, and their immigrant experiences in Cyprus, both online and offline. The oral mode allowed the speakers to elaborate on certain issues and to provide more information supported by actual examples from their life experiences as immigrants and detailed descriptions of actual conditions, which helped to define meaning categories. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes; they were conducted in Greek, English, and Russian based on the participants' preferences. The interview data were transcribed respectively in Greek, English, and Russian for the purposes of coding and analysis.

The data were recorded, transcribed, and analysed in line with the qualitative content analysis method (QCA) (Mayring, 2014; Hashemi, 2020). The theory-driven deductive approach to QCA was the most relevant to the purposes of this

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study. The verbatim transcription of the interviews allowed to retain relevant context in the material, which is important due to the context-dependent nature of the QCA method. The familiarity of the researcher with the data, immersion in and with the data, facilitated context-sensitive interpretation of the data (Selvi, 2020). First, research questions and hypotheses were formulated, the coding frame, codes and categories, were defined based on the previous research and existing theories on FLP, which allowed to transform the transcribed data into meaningful and manageable units of information and thematic segmentation (Schreier, 2014).

4 Findings

4.1 Linguistic and cultural identities, DLCs, and HL use, maintenance and transmission

The analysis of the data revealed that minority speakers and second-generation immigrants had hybrid language and cultural identities, different perceptions regarding citizenship, inclusion, and belonging. They attempted to assimilate into the target society but still had strong links to the community of residence, to their L1 country, and to their heritage or home language.

The participants also engaged in hybrid language practices, as they use mixed/multiple languages in the home and outside of it. Overall, they had a positive attitude towards multilingualism and the multilingual landscape in Cyprus.

The participants mainly had hybrid language and cultural identities, and only half of them considered themselves to be full members of Cypriot society. Due to the bilectal setting in Cyprus, most of the participants mentioned CG as part of their cultural identity. Their linguistic repertoires were comprised of up to five languages, while their DLCs included between two and three languages, which were their L1s, Greek, and English; see Table 1 and Figures 1 to 3.

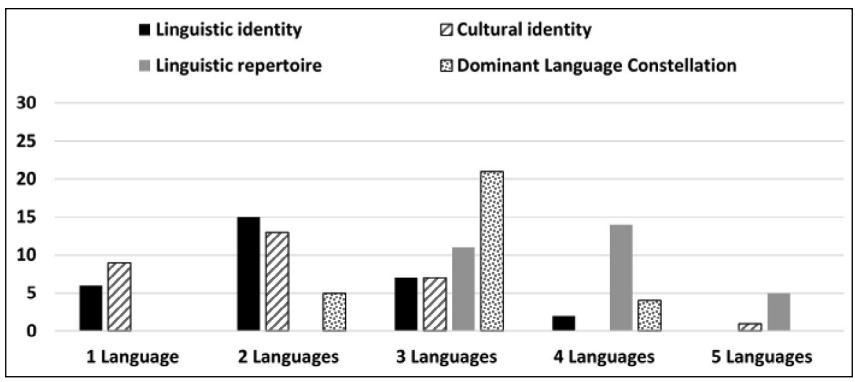


Figure 1: Linguistic and cultural identity, linguistic repertoire and DLC of the participants

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Hybrid language and cultural identities depend on the amount of time spent in the country and on the language proficiency in the target language, as well as on the FLP and the type of family; mixed-marriage, bilingual, multilingual, or not. See Excerpts (1) to (4), which were taken from the interviews with participants from different L1 backgrounds:

Excerpt 1

> Both cultures, because I am Romanian and Greek because I moved to Cyprus, and I learned their customs and slowly I started doing the same things that they do. (*L1 Romanian participant*)

Excerpt 2

> Cypriot culture because my mother is Cypriot and also because I am here for long enough to identify myself as Cypriot. (*L1 Arabic participant with Palestinian roots*)

Excerpt 3

> Georgian, Pontic Greek, Russian, Greek-Cypriot because I was raised in all of them. (*L1 Georgian student*)

Excerpt 4

> Armenian culture because I grew up in the Armenian community of Cyprus, and Cypriot culture because I was born and live in Cyprus. (*L1 Armenian participant*)

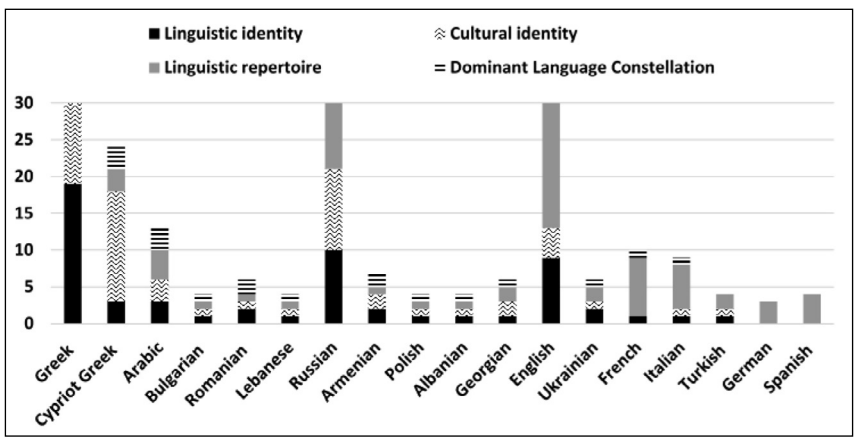


Figure 2: Languages: Linguistic and cultural identity, linguistic repertoire and DLC of the participants

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Strong links with the L1 country and culture, its history and traditions, cuisine, television programmes, and HL attrition, use, maintenance, and transmission were some of the factors that contributed to the L1 linguistic and cultural identities; see Excerpt 5 from an interview with a Lebanese minority speaker:

Excerpt 5

> I identify with both Lebanese and Cypriot culture. As immigrants, my parents always encouraged me and my brother to stay in touch with our Lebanese culture by following most of its traditions and values. For example, we celebrate Mother's Day on the 21st of March instead of the 8th of March, the day it is celebrated in Cyprus. In addition, we were always in contact with the Lebanese culture through television. In the house we only have cable TV that has Arabic channels and not Cypriot or Greek ones. Also, most dishes that we make at home are Lebanese. At the same time, I also identify with the Cypriot culture, because I was raised here and most of my friends I grew up with are Cypriots. And many traditions and values that I follow now as an adult belong to the Cypriot culture. (*L1 Lebanese participant*)

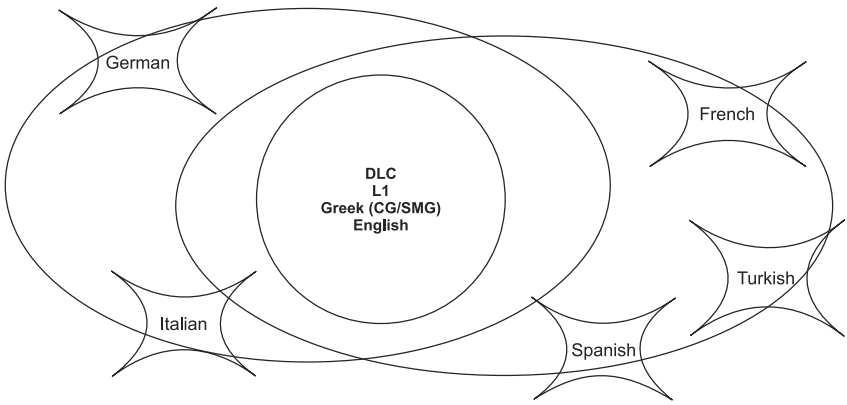


Figure 3: DLC of the participants

The linguistic behaviour of both the mother and the father and their FLP were of tremendous importance, as was communication with the extended family and relatives. Linguistic and cultural identities are affected by customs, the material culture, and the stereotypical rules of the L1 countries; see Excerpt 6:

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Excerpt 6

> Cypriot, Greek and Russian. I identify myself with the particular cultures due to matters of origin; my mother is Russian, and my father is half Cypriot and half Greek. I grew up with relatives from all three countries, being heavily influenced, and having consistent associations with the countries' cuisines, customs, prejudices as well as manners and/or ethics. (*L1 Russian participant*)

4.2 FLP, and HL use, maintenance, and transmission

The analysis of the data revealed that families differed in terms of their FLPs and the parental efforts to support their children's HL and literacy development. The socioeconomic status (SES) of the family, the language proficiency in and command of both the minority language and the MLs, as well as the social networks, affected the patterns of language use. The material culture, namely the presence of different items relevant to the HL culture, can boost the HL linguistic and cultural identity and promote a positive attitude towards the HL culture and language; see Excerpt 7:

Excerpt 7

> We speak only Romanian at home. My parents do not know Greek very well. They do not speak Greek as well as I do because I went to a Greek-speaking school (...). My father has more friends from Cyprus and my mother recently has friends from Romania, but there are not so many.(...) They come to our house, I see them as well, we communicate (...). I have only Cypriot friends… Here in Paphos, we have a Romanian shop, but we actually do not go there (...). At home we have so-called Romanian 'touch' if I can say this. We have different carpets from Romania, traditional items (...) flowers, statues … my parents have brought them from Romania (...). (*L1 Romanian participant*)

It was not always the case that both parents had the same views regarding the FLP, as one partner may have been in favour of the ML while the other might have attempted to support the HL. This can be explained by the pressure, frustration, and anxiety of some of the immigrants as well as a strong desire to integrate into the mainstream society even if this means sacrificing their L1; see Excerpt 8:

Excerpt 8

> At first, my mother was helping me to learn Greek. On the other hand, my father was always telling me: Do not forget

> your Bulgarian. He was constantly murmuring. Then, when I grew older and I learnt Greek better and I was speaking more Greek in my everyday life outside my home, I started to forget words in Bulgarian and to code-switch to Greek. My father kept telling me: Speak your mother tongue otherwise you will forget it. So, on one hand, I had my mother who was pushing me to learn Greek; on the other hand, I had my father who insisted that I should not forget my native language. Thus, there was a good balance between both of my parents. My parents only speak Bulgarian to each other. (*L1 Bulgarian participant*)

Many parents expended a significant amount of effort on supporting the HL, on creating a home literacy environment (HLE) and on having pro-HL FLPs. It was important for them that their children knew how to read and write in the HL, but it was sometimes quite difficult for their children to cope with the high cognitive load as they needed to study at the Greek public schools in addition to attending community or heritage schools or extra classes. They could do this easily at the primary level, but it became much more difficult at the secondary level. When the learning tasks become more complex, the children can easily lose their motivation and engagement, which they might regret later when they are older; see Excerpt 9:

Excerpt 9

> First, my parents tried to speak only Russian to me, I had an ABC book and some other books. I also spoke Russian with my relatives from Russia. Then, my parents sent me to the private classes in the Russian language so that I can read and write in a correct way. There are a lot of Russian schools or Russian private centres in Paphos as we have a lot of Russian speakers there. I went to private classes for one year, together with my friend. Then, I was already at the lyceum, I had so much to do in my Greek school (...). Besides, I was also not as much motivated to continue my Russian classes (...). Well, we had to learn Russian poems by heart, I was thinking that it is useless (...). Also, I was not so good at writing in Russian, so I decided to quit (...). I told my parents that I wanted to stop my classes, they also saw that I was not interested any more (...). Now, when I got older, I understand that if [I] would have continued my Russian classes it would be much easier for me (...). (*L1 Russian participant*)

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Not all the participants had the opportunity to attend extracurricular activities and classes in their HL community or heritage schools, which could have allowed them to develop their HL literacy skills; thus, many of them had learnt the HL by themselves at home assisted only by their parents. The participants had difficulty with the L1 script and grammar due to cross-linguistic interference and the lack of appropriate schooling and balanced input in the L1 and in the second language (L2). The role of the extended family cannot be denied, as frequent visits to the L1 country, communication with relatives and access to educational materials and books are essential for the support of the minority language; see Excerpt 10:

Excerpt 10

> I learnt to read and write in Polish by myself (...). At home we mainly have Greek and English books (...)… as for Polish books, I brought some books with me when I went to Poland last time. My grandmother gave these books to me, she told me that I would really like to read them. However, I found it difficult to read in Polish, you know it is a different script, pronunciation is different (...). I can have a wrong stress when I read, and I do not understand some words when I read for the first time. (*L1 Polish participant*)

Heritage or community schools can be quite expensive in Cyprus, which can place an extra burden on immigrant families with low SES. Therefore, it was not uncommon for second-generation immigrants not to have had formal schooling in their HL, but they were eager to self-educate themselves under the guidance of their parents and extended family; see Excerpt 11:

Excerpt 11

> There are Bulgarian schools in Cyprus. I wanted to go to a Bulgarian school, but when we went there, we realised that the classes that they have there are mainly about Bulgarian customs, history, and traditions and not so much focused on the Bulgarian language learning. The school was also very expensive. My aunt in Bulgaria is a teacher. We asked her to send us Bulgarian books and educational materials and she sent us relevant books on language, literature, and history. So, I tried to learn Bulgarian by myself. I am comfortable with the Bulgarian language, I can speak, write, and read. At home, we have more Greek books, but of course we have some books in Bulgarian and in English. I read Bulgarian books when I have free time,

> I speak Bulgarian with my parents, grandparents, relatives and friends. So, I think that I know Bulgarian very well. (*L1 Bulgarian participant*)

It is important to note that parents can create an HLE by building a home library and providing their children with access to books and educational materials in different languages. It is interesting to note that English, as a global language, plays a crucial role in Cyprus due to its postcolonial situation and because it is a popular tourist destination; thus, the second-generation immigrants also prioritised the English language, sometimes even placing it above their L1 and L2; see Excerpt 12:

Excerpt 12

> I have mainly English books as I wanted to have practice with English. My mother has both Greek and Russian books. Our relatives brought some Russian books or we bought some Russian book here (...). (*L1 Russian participant*)

Moreover, the children's or teenagers' agency was one of the key factors that could affect the HL and literacy development because, even if the parents attempted to support the use, maintenance, and transmission of the HL, there could be strong resistance from the children or teenagers due to various factors such as a lack of interest or motivation, a lack of time, a low level of language proficiency, cognitive overload, peer pressure and attitudes, as well as the status and prestige of the HL; see Excerpt 13:

Excerpt 13

> I did not go to Bulgarian school to learn the language properly, in the correct way (...). You know when I was a child I did not want to go to a Bulgarian school, to have extra classes, I kept saying to my parents that I know it, no, I did not need to go there I was born in Bulgaria. I wanted to start learning English. (...) Now, I understand that it was my mistake, and I should have gone (...). (*L1 Bulgarian participant*)

Most of the participants were in favour of maintaining the HL and transmitting it to their own children in the future, the third generation of immigrants or minority speakers in Cyprus. They appeared to be positive about multilingualism and its integrative, cultural, symbolic, and instrumental values. Not all of them were ready to return to their L1 country and considered Cyprus to be their home country; see Excerpt 14:

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Excerpt 14

> In the future, I am thinking that it would be nice if my own children learn and know the Romanian language and culture… It is important to be multilingual, it [is] good for employability (...). I am from Romania, why should I not teach them my language [?]… Personally, I do not want to return back to Romania, I think that it will be very difficult for me to get used to the language (...). No (...) I will stay here, in Cyprus (...). In Romania, [the] mentality is different. (*L1 Romanian participant*)

Not all the siblings followed their families' FLPs due to having different life trajectories as adults, but there was understanding and agreement that multilingualism was useful in many respects and that it was beneficial to preserve the HL and culture; see Excerpt 15:

Excerpt 15

> Both of my parents tried to maintain the Russian language in our family. They believe that it is very important. For example, my brother has children, and they tell him to teach Russian to his children (...). One extra language is always useful. However, my brother associates himself only with Greek, he lives in Greece (...) I think that it is not correct, that he makes a mistake… His wife is Greek, but she wants her children to learn Russian. If I have children in the future, I would teach them Russian for sure, to maintain the Russian culture, but then, of course, I will teach them English as well (...) as it is an important language. (*L1 Russian participant*)

Code-switching was found to be quite a common phenomenon in immigrant and minority families in Cyprus. Both parents and children found it convenient to switch between languages and to mix them. The participants admitted that they were affected by the ML. The L1 and the L2 have different registers and domains of use. The HL was used mainly in the home environment, while the ML was used outside of it; see Excerpt 16:

Excerpt 16

> I was born and raised in Cyprus. My father was born in Georgia and then raised in Russia and my mother is from Russia. My brother was born in Russia, but when our family moved first to Greece and then to Cyprus he assimilated into the Greek language and culture. He was around four or five years old then. My aunt still lives in Greece,

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> while our family moved to Cyprus as we had our other relatives here. I am bilingual as two languages, Russian and Greek, are present in my life. At home we mix languages. It depends on the situation. I can start the sentence in Russian and finish it in Greek; the other can reply in Russian, I can then answer in Greek or vice versa. For me it is much easier to think in Greek than in Russian, but, again, everything depends on the particular situation. (*L1 Russian/Georgian participant*)

The participants admitted that code-switching depended on the situation, the setting, and the interlocutors. It was sometimes difficult for the HL speakers to find the correct word in their minority language; accordingly, they needed to resort to the ML. The parents code-switched quite often, and their children might have simply imitated their linguistic behaviour; see Excerpt 17:

Excerpt 17

> At home, we speak Bulgarian. Me personally, I am constantly code-switching: Bulgarian – Greek. Sometimes I try to speak to my mother in Russian to learn this language because my parents learnt more Russian than English in Bulgaria then, so both my parents know Russian very well. But yes, at home, we speak more Bulgarian. With my brother, we speak Bulgarian, sometimes Greek. Code-switching depends on the situation, the topic as well (...). If it is about my everyday life, then it is very easy to switch to Greek. As I speak more Greek in my everyday life, so I often forget Bulgarian words, even simple words. Then, I code-switch to Greek. (*L1 Bulgarian participant*)

Compared to simultaneous bilinguals who were born in Cyprus, sequential bilinguals have a much more difficult task in terms of learning Greek, the majority or society language. When a child migrates to the host country at an older age, he or she struggles to learn the ML and is immersed in the mainstream schooling process. The parents also attempt to integrate into the new society and to help their child as much as they can. English is often the mediation language, or the children may have peers and friends at the same HL at school who can help them adjust to the new educational and societal environment; see Excerpt 18:

Excerpt 18

> Our family came from Bulgaria 10 years ago, my mother and father, my brother, and I. My parents work in Cyprus, and I am a student right now. First, I did not know any Greek.

> I was ten years old when I arrived in Cyprus. I started attending the 5th grade of the Greek public school. I was learning Greek with the help of English. Before I came to Cyprus, I was in Bulgaria, I attended public school there. I learnt to read and write in Bulgarian. As for Bulgarian, luckily, I had two co-students, my peers, who helped me in class in order to understand what the others were telling me. So, I always had some classmates, who knew Bulgarian, and we communicated together. (*L1 Bulgarian participant*)

4.3 HL attrition, use, maintenance and transmission

It was found that HL attrition, use, maintenance, and transmission depended on the AoO, the LoR, the quality and quantity of input, language use, type of and domains of use, child/teenager agency, motivation and willingness to learn and use the HL, schooling, opportunities for literacy development, FLP and the SES. It also depended on the social network, extended family, relatives, linguistic and cultural identities, and the material culture at home.

The participants were asked to evaluate their HL attrition. The analysis of the data (interviews and questionnaires) revealed that the most vulnerable areas for HL attrition were code-switching, pronunciation, and writing and reading skills, followed by syntax, morphology, grammar, lexicon, speaking, fluency, and comprehension (see Table 2).

The results of the attitude and motivational questionnaire (Schmid and Dusseldorp, 2010) indicated that, overall, the participants moderately or strongly agreed that it was important to support minority/HL and culture and that the presence of heritage speakers in Cyprus increased its cultural and linguistic diversity. With regard to their attitudes towards foreign languages, immigrant and minority speakers, agreed moderately or strongly, that the knowledge of foreign languages was essential for communication, education, travelling, and entertainment.

In general, minority and heritage speakers in Cyprus had a positive attitude towards the Cypriots and found them to be friendly, hospitable, cheerful, agreeable, kind and generous, and stated that the (Cypriot) Greek language played an important role in their lives. The participants moderately agreed that L1 speakers were, in general, sociable, warm-hearted and creative people who were trustworthy, cheerful, agreeable, kind, and generous and said that they would like to meet more L1 people. The respondents acknowledged the equal role of the L1 and the L2 in their lives, particularly with regard to their (meta)linguistic awareness, comprehension, and production, affective domainsm and culture. Many of the participants agreed that (Cypriot) Greek was their dominant language, which they used more often than they did their L1 and to which they had the strongest emotional ties, see Table 3.

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Table 2. Self-perceived attrition.

N	L1	Lexicon	Grammar	Pronunciation	Morphology	Syntax	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Comprehension	Fluency	CS
1	Romanian	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	50%	50%	0%	0%	25%	50%
2	Bulgarian	0%	25%	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	50%
3	Lebanese	50%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	25%	25%	50%	50%
4	Arabic	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	100%	100%	50%	50%	50%	75%
5	Russian	25%	50%	50%	50%	25%	50%	50%	25%	0%	25%	50%
6	Ukrainian	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	50%
7	Georgian	50%	50%	75%	75%	75%	75%	100%	25%	25%	50%	75%
8	Armenian	25%	50%	75%	50%	50%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	50%
9	Russian	50%	75%	75%	75%	75%	50%	50%	25%	25%	50%	50%
10	Arabic	50%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	50%	50%	50%	75%
11	Russian	25%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	75%	25%	25%	25%	25%
12	Arabic	25%	25%	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%
13	Polish	50%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	25%	25%	25%	75%
14	Ukrainian	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%
15	Albanian	25%	25%	75%	50%	50%	75%	75%	25%	0%	25%	50%
16	English	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	25%	50%
17	English	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
18	Greek	25%	0%	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%	25%	25%	25%	50%
19	Romanian	25%	25%	50%	25%	50%	50%	50%	25%	0%	25%	75%
20	Greek	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	25%	25%

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21	Greek	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	25%	25%
22	Greek	25%	0%	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%
23	English	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%	25%	25%	25%	0%	0%	25%
24	Russian	25%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	25%	25%	50%
25	Armenian	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
26	Russian	50%	25%	25%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	25%	25%	25%
27	Greek	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%
28	Russian	50%	50%	50%	75%	75%	75%	75%	100%	25%	25%	50%
29	Georgian	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	75%	75%	50%	25%	25%	75%
30	Georgian	25%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	100%	25%	25%	25%	50%
Total		**Lexicon**	**Grammar**	**Pronunciation**	**Morphology**	**Syntax**	**Reading**	**Writing**	**Speaking**	**Comprehension**	**Fluency**	**CS**
33%		**35%**	**46%**	**38%**	**40%**	**41%**	**44%**	25%	18%	25%	48%	

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Table 3. Attitude and motivation questionnaire.

Part 1: Your attitude towards L1 people in Cyprus	**Strongly disagree**	**Moderately disagree**	**Neutral**	**Moderately agree**	**Strongly agree**
L1 people in Cyprus are a very sociable, warm- hearted and creative people.	0%	0%	31%	54%	15%
I would like to know more L1 people in Cyprus.	8%	0%	54%	23%	15%
L1 people in Cyprus add a distinctive flavour to the Cypriot culture.	0%	8%	62%	30%	0%
The more I get to know the L1 people in Cyprus, the more important it is to me that my L1 remains good.	8%	23%	31%	15%	23%
Some of our best citizens are of L1 descent.	15%	0%	54%	31%	0%
The L1 heritage is an important part of our Cypriot identity.	0%	7%	31%	31%	31%
Most L1 people in Cyprus are so friendly and easy to get along with that Cyprus is fortunate to have them.	8%	8%	62%	15%	7%
Part 2: Your attitude towards foreign languages	**Strongly disagree**	**Moderately disagree**	**Neutral**	**Moderately agree**	**Strongly agree**
If I were visiting a foreign country, I would like to be able to speak the language of the people.	0%	8%	0%	54%	38%
It is important to learn foreign languages.	0%	0%	0%	8%	92%
I wish I could speak another language perfectly.	0%	8%	0%	23%	69%
I want to read the literature of a foreign language in the original language rather than a translation.	8%	0%	31%	38%	23%
I often wish I could read newspapers and magazines in another language.	8%	8%	46%	15%	23%
I would really like to learn a lot of foreign languages.	0%	0%	24%	38%	38%

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If I planned to stay in another country, I would make a great effort to learn the language even though I could get along in English.	0%	0%	15%	46%	39%
I enjoy meeting and listening to people who speak other languages.	0%	0%	24%	38%	38%
Studying a foreign language is an enjoyable experience.	0%	0%	8%	46%	46%
Part 3: Your attitude towards Cypriots	**Strongly disagree**	**Moderately disagree**	**Neutral**	**Moderately agree**	**Strongly agree**
Cypriots are considerate of the feelings of others.	0%	8%	62%	30%	0%
I have a favourable attitude towards Cypriots.	0%	8%	54%	31%	8%
Cypriots are trustworthy and dependable.	0%	15%	38%	47%	0%
Cypriots are very friendly and hospitable.	0%	0%	15%	77%	8%
Cypriots are cheerful, agreeable and good humoured.	0%	0%	38%	62%	0%
Cypriots are a very kind and generous people.	0%	8%	46%	31%	15%
Learning (Cypriot) Greek is really great.	0%	0%	8%	54%	38%
Part 4: Your attitude towards L1 people	**Strongly disagree**	**Moderately disagree**	**Neutral**	**Moderately agree**	**Strongly agree**
L1 people are a very sociable, warm-hearted and creative people.	0%	8%	38%	38%	16%
I would like to meet more L1 people.	0%	0%	46%	38%	16%
L1 people are considerate of the feelings of others	0%	0%	70%	15%	15%
I have a favourable attitude towards L1 people.	0%	15%	54%	23%	8%
L1 people are trustworthy and dependable.	0%	0%	62%	31%	7%
L1 people are very friendly and hospitable.	0%	0%	54%	23%	23%
L1 people are cheerful, agreeable and good humoured.	0%	0%	39%	39%	22%

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L1 people are a very kind and generous people.	0%	0%	54%	31%	15%
L1 people are trustworthy and dependable.	0%	0%	62%	15%	23%
Part 5: Which language(s) play(s) which role for you?	**Only Greek**	**Mostly Greek**	**Both**	**Mostly L1**	**Only L1**
Language in which you think most often	15%	38%	15%	23%	8%
Language in which you dream most often	23%	31%	31%	8%	8%
Language in which you pray	23%	23%	24%	15%	15%
Dominant language (i.e. language you are “best” at)	24%	38%	15%	15%	8%
Language in which you have the largest vocabulary	15%	46%	8%	23%	8%
Language in which you have no pronunciation problems	15%	15%	54%	8%	8%
Language which you are able to understand / use intuitively	15%	15%	54%	8%	8%
Language in which you are familiar with various dialects, slang	15%	54%	23%	0%	8%
Language in which you have an intuitive feeling what is «correct» and «incorrect»	15%	30%	47%	0%	8%
Language into which you are able to translate	8%	22%	54%	8%	8%
Language in which you can understand and make jokes	8%	8%	68%	8%	8%
Language in which you swear most often	15%	15%	39%	23%	8%
Language to which you have the strongest emotional ties	15%	30%	25%	15%	15%
Language / country / culture with which you identity most	15%	23%	46%	8%	8%
Language spoken by / with most friends	23%	62%	15%	0%	0%
Language used most on a daily basis	8%	23%	62%	7%	0%
Language which is your native language.	30%	0%	31%	0%	39%
Language of which other speakers consider you a native speaker.	15%	15%	38%	0%	32%

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5 Discussion and conclusion

This study was explorative in nature as it included a heterogeneous sample of participants who were second-generation immigrants and minority language speakers in Cyprus. The research focused on the most representative language groups, namely, immigrant and minority community groups on the island. Mixed-method methodology and a thorough analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data allowed the researcher to report on the complex linguistic situation of each immigrant and minority family based on the participants' narratives and reflections. It became obvious that each case was unique, as multiple factors came into play. It was clear that the FLP played an important role in heritage/minority language use, maintenance and transmission. Parental choices, attitudes and beliefs, implicit or explicit, were decisive in the support of the home language and the development of literacy in the HL. These findings are in line with the previous research by Bohnacker (2022), Karpava, Ringblom, and Zabrodskaja (2021, 2022).

Child agency, or children's resistance to or collaboration with their parents regarding home language use and development, can affect the outcome of the pro-HL or pro-ML FLPs, which agrees with the previous studies by Kheirkhah and Cekaite (2018), and Paradis, Soto-Corominas, Chen, and Gottardo (2020). The second-generation immigrants and minority speakers reflected on their childhoods and their parental language management strategies, FLPs and HLEs, and admitted that they had an active voice, particularly as they grew older, and that their parents had respected their decisions. Children and teenagers were often influenced by their peers, school environments, and social networks. Not every family managed to preserve the HL or minority language, as the priority was to learn the ML and to integrate into the host society. The families were influenced by socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors (Schwartz, 2020; Smith-Christmas, 2020).

The findings of the present study support the language policy model (Spolsky, 2012), as the FLPs of the minority and immigrant families in Cyprus depended on language ideologies, language practices and language management (Bezcioglu-Goktolga and Yagmur, 2022; Bohnacker, 2022). There was a clear interrelationship between macro and micro factors with regard to FLPs and HL attrition, incomplete acquisition, and maintenance, which corroborates previous research findings (Spolsky, 2012; Liu and Lin, 2019).

The analysis of the data revealed that the participants had some similarities and some differences regarding their DLCs, linguistic behaviour, and language attitudes and identities. They differed in terms of their Greek AoO, their LoR in

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Cyprus, their language dominance, the domains of language use, HL attrition, language proficiency, and literacy skills, but they were similar in terms of having hybrid linguistic and cultural identities, the presence of SMG/CG and English in their DLCs, code-switching, code-mixing, and translanguaging, which supports the results of previous research (García and Li Wei, 2014) to some extent.

The participants in Cyprus were exposed to national languages and MLs, but they also spoke their immigrant or minority languages. (Cypriot) Greek is a national language in Cyprus. Our participants were second-generation immigrants in Cyprus or minority speakers and, for them, (Cypriot) Greek was either the L2 or an additional language; thus, they experienced certain challenges in the mainstream education system.

Immigrant, minority, and HL speakers in Cyprus maintained their HL(s). As they lived in a bilectal setting, they were exposed to the national language, to SMG, and to CG orally; at university, they needed to use English for their studies. They used vehicle languages to function in society, for their education and in their personal lives. They had different language proficiencies in their L1s, L2s, L3s, and Lns, which had different functions and domains of use. Their access to various languages in their multilingual repertoire was unequal. Not all of them had schooling or could develop literacy skills in their home languages. Thus, a question remains regarding inclusive and equitable education in multilingual settings since more institutional and policy support is required in the age of globalisation and superdiversity.

It was found that community language schools played an important role in HL development, the prevention of HL attrition, and the strengthening of cultural and linguistic identities as well as in increasing of their sense of solidarity and belonging to a HL community, which is in line with previous research (Nordstrom, 2020). The findings indicated that the incomplete acquisition, attrition, use, maintenance and transmission of the HL depended on the AoO, the LoR, the quality and quantity of input, access to community or heritage language schools, language use, the type and domains of use, linguistic domains (such as phonology, literacy skills and code-switching CS), child/teenager agency, motivation and willingness to learn and use the HL, schooling, opportunities for literacy development, FLP, SES, and social networks, the extended family and relatives, the linguistic and cultural identities and the material culture at home, which provide further evidence in support of previous investigations of the topic (Schmid, 2013; Schmid and Köpke, 2019).

The participants agreed that it was important to support the HL and its culture, although they also admitted that they could not function in Cypriot society without knowledge of the ML. Thus, they considered both languages to be essential,

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particularly regarding their (meta)linguistic awareness, comprehension and production, and the affective domain and culture, which is consistent with the results of other studies (Montrul and Polinsky, 2019; Brehmer and Treffers-Daller, 2020). The findings of this study provide further evidence showing a close link between FLP and HL development in multilingual families taking such factors as SES, DLCs, cultural and linguistic identities, and migratory trajectories of the participants into consideration. Despite the small size of the sample and heterogeneity, the present study, via the implementation of a mixed-method approach to data collection and analysis, has both theoretical and practical implications. It enriches the field of FLP research and links it to the field of heritage language acquisition and language attrition because it provides findings from the lived experiences of the children of the immigrants in Cyprus, their views and reflections regarding HL use, attrition, maintenance, and transmission. On the practical side, the findings of this small-scale research project can be used for raising awareness of parents and educators regarding the value of FLP, HL maintenance and transmission for language policy recommendations and future research.

It is important to continue this type of research, both longitudinal and cross-sectional, including linguistic, sociolinguistic and critical analyses, based on experimental and spontaneous speech data with more participants in each L1 background and local populations. By doing so, we can obtain deeper insight into the issues of migration in Cyprus, global mobility and integration, educational policies and language contact, hybrid linguistic and cultural identities, FLPs, and minority language and HL attrition, use, maintenance, and transmission.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank three reviewers for taking the necessary time and effort to review the manuscript, and sincerely appreciates all their valuable comments and suggestions.

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Notes

1. A DLC is 'the constellation of one's dominant languages, a group of one's most important (vehicle) languages, functioning as an entire unit, and enabling an individual to meet all needs in a multilingual environment' (Aronin, 2006: 145; Aronin, 2016).

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(Received 30th November 2022; accepted 28th February 2023;
final revision received 20th June 2023)

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