Introduction: Language, heritage, and family: A dynamic perspective

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1. Toward a dynamic understanding of 'heritage'

This special issue aims to diversify the concept of 'heritage' in language studies by examining the myriad ways that heritage is understood and enacted in the family. This is an important area for investigation since many of the ways that heritage operates in family contexts conflict with the more static portrayals of heritage in language education settings, a context that has influenced current understandings of heritage language (HL) identity and its relationship to HL learning and teaching (Leeman 2015). Whether scholars examine questions of identity or language proficiency, HL speakers in educational contexts are typically assumed to be individuals who are raised in homes where a language other than the dominant or majority language is spoken, but who speak and or understand the language to some degree. In these contexts, HL speakers are mostly framed as children of (first-generation) immigrants who value their HL as a pathway to reclaiming or maintaining their ethnic identities and who affiliate with the language because of a deep-seated cultural calling (Duff 2014; He 2006; Leeman 2015). As Valdés (2005) points out, a broader notion of HL has developed over the past decade that extends the concept in many ways by acknowledging that the languages that speakers might inherit do not necessarily lead to identity affiliations with those languages, and that speakers may have affiliations with language but may well lack linguistic expertise (Leung, Harris and Rampton 1997). Rather than assuming that heritage matters, or that we know what is meant by heritage in HL use, it is important to explore whether and to what degree family members see heritage as intrinsically linked to the languages they speak, and to better understand what shapes

the relationship between social identities and language. Accordingly, the papers in this collection explore the ways that families encounter and negotiate the concept of heritage from a dynamic perspective.

It is important to acknowledge that just as in educational contexts, in the home, *primordialist* views (Pieterse 1997) of language and ethnolinguistic identity have long been prevalent. Typically, older members and first-generation immigrant members of family networks treat language as an immutable characteristic of their heritage and as the key to ethnolinguistic identity. Parents and grandparents may insist on a nation-of-origin orientation to language and culture, but their children can respond quite differently, affiliating with their local context and local languages instead. For example, in an early study by Curdt-Christiansen (2003), first-generation Chinese parents in Quebec, Canada felt it was necessary for their children to maintain Chinese as a means of fostering connections and to maintain the ability to communicate with an "ancient civilization" (207). Similarly, Zhu Hua (2010) discusses how Chinese parents in England attempted to teach their son what they considered to be appropriate Chinese reference forms for people, reminding him of past visits to China and the address terms used there. However, their son rejected his parents' advice, finding it awkward to use the reference term "uncle" for a man he did not know.

On the other hand, more recent work has also found that individuals and communities do not always see the link to maintaining culture or ethnic identity as tied to language, laying bare the lack of 'natural' ties between heritage and language in certain families. Canagarajah (2013) illustrated how some first-generation parents did not view Tamil as a necessary route to maintain one's ethnic or cultural identity in families in London, as long as other cultural practices, such as performing Tamil songs, going to temple, and being able to appreciate Tamil foods, were

maintained. In his research on French-Kinyarwanda speaking families in Belgium, Gafaranga (2010) documented how parents and their children engaged in a discursive form of language shift by carrying out dual-language conversations, with the parents using Kinyarwanda while the children spoke French. While some parents claimed that Kinyarwanda was central to their identity as Rwandans, others expressed more ambivalent relations to the language due to its association with a traumatic past and with their own status as refugees who had been granted asylum from a war-torn country. Their interactional practices, therefore, were supportive of language shift.

2. Dynamic family language policies

By exploring the ways that families make sense of their heritage(s) with reference to language, this collection of papers contributes to the field of family language policy (FLP), an area of study that refers to the various forms of language planning that take place in relation to language and literacy practices within the home and among family members (King, Fogle and Logan-Terry 2008). FLP meshes lines of inquiry involving language socialization, linguistic ideology, and language in interaction to better understand how families manage their languages and what sort of activities and practices they engage that lead to language development as well as language shift. Research on (FLP) has developed a great deal over the past decade, as a number of important volumes and studies have recently addressed not only how families navigate the use of language in the home, but also what impact that social, economic, and ideological forces have on family language practices (Fogle 2012; Li Wei and Lanza 2016; Li Wei 2012; Macalister and Mirvahedi 2017; Smith-Christmas 2015). While early socially-oriented research on language in the family examined what types of practices were best for language transmission outcomes, this

more recent phase of work has reframed key questions on FLP by recognizing the family as a dynamic system.

In a historical review of the field of FLP, King (2016) notes that the more recent phase of FLP however is less concerned about language itself and more interested in the ways that families negotiate meaning with one another and engage in being families, drawing on linguistic resources to do so. At the macrolevel, the work of being a family is dynamic because it investigates how the shifting social, political, and economic forces outside the home impact language attitudes, beliefs, and practices (e.g., Curdt-Christiansen 2013). Here, transnationalism, political changes, economic restructuring, and shifts in educational policy all interact with FLP. At the microlevel, FLP is also dynamically constructed since language maintenance, language norms, and language shift can all be researched with reference to how family members use their heritage languages in their interactions with one another (e.g., Smith-Christmas 2014). Contrary to the classic understanding of adult family members transmitting heritage languages to children in the domain of the home, such research exposes the details of multilingual family repertoires which are sometimes distributed across people, time, space, and technology (Lanza and Svendsen 2007). Fine-grained analysis of observations and recordings shows how family members draw on their heritage languages in dynamic ways to express not only authoritative identities as guardians and caretakers, but also how humorous, artful, creative, and transgressive identities are produced. This work also shows how children often socialize older generations into particular language practices, calling attention to the power dynamics that children can produce in spite of their relative lack of authority due to age.

Fishman (1991) argued that the family was a key domain for intergenerational language transmission, and much research has established strong links between ethnolinguistic identity

and language vitality (Landry and Allard 1994; Fishman 1991; Giles et al. 1977). However, as individual families establish their own language policies and heterogeneous practices, and as family members affiliate variously with multiple communities, these factors have become more challenging to distinguish and to assess. In exploring the relationship between heritage, identity, and language in families, this special issue explores the range of ways that new generations claim belonging in their families' linguistic and cultural heritages. It examines the forms of linguistic and cultural expression that they engage in, and considers how these forms of expression are related to a heritage. In doing so, the authors pay attention to the contextual factors that shape the identities that new generations form in regard to their family language(s), including the roles that social class, ethnicity, and the status of languages in their social contexts play.

3. Overview of the papers

The first two papers investigate the dynamic nature of language norms and ideologies of heritage among families. First, Suresh Canagarajah re-examines the notion of HL by examining practice-based perspectives in the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. His paper highlights the dynamic nature of the ontological status of a heritage language in a reterritorialized location. In the diaspora, "knowing Tamil" means having the ability to align verbal resources strategically with multimodal semiotic resources and spatial repertoires to accomplish social and cultural communicative activities. He draws from data from a qualitative inquiry adopting observations, surveys, and interviews on how families of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora community in UK, USA, and Canada define heritage language and competence. In the second article, Christina Higgins continues looking at norms and ideologies by investigating how *new speakers* of Hawaiian express their authenticity in dynamic ways. Hawaiian is a language which lost the vast

majority of its speakers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries due to disease and oppressive language policies of the American colonial government. Due to a Hawaiian cultural renaissance in the 1970s, immersion schools developed which have now produced adults who are raising their own families in homes where Hawaiian is spoken. By studying the speakers' stance-taking towards different forms of Hawaiian, including translingual practices, traditional Hawaiian, and standardized, "University Hawaiian," Higgins explores how they construct authenticity as speakers of this language and how they establish their own FLPs.

The next two papers investigate how family language ideologies show continuity and change due to family biographies of the past as well as imagined futures. First, Li Wei and Zhu Hua study the role of the imagination in language ideologies and practices across members of the Chinese diaspora in England. Their data is from a large-scale family ethnography project that was started 30 years ago, thus allowing for a unique and rich opportunity to see how families' trajectories of language maintenance or shift is related to their ideological and social pathways. In interviews with families who maintained languages, a discourse of return to the home country was one aspect of this imagination that arguably led to the maintenance of Chinese. While such returns never happened to any of the families in the course of 30 years of the research, Li Wei and Zhu Hua found that the imagining and re-imagining of futures helped to produce a more dynamic notion of heritage and heritage language, as well as a more complex sense of belonging, in England. The next article, by Judith Purkarthofer and Guri Bordal Steien also engages with ever-changing language ideologies as parents from Germany and the Congo in Norway reinterpret and refashion their own FLPs. Though the parents wanted their children to speak German or Swahili in the home, their children's increasing use of Norwegian required that the parents reassess their FLPs, leading them to reconsider where they had previously established the

boundaries of their FLPs. Drawing on Ricoeur's (1992) concepts of continuity (concordance) and change (discordance) as forces of biographical development, they show how parents' narrated experiences serve as the basis for future decisions about the FLP, and in particular, how the role of the children discovering their parents' language abilities in Norwegian strengthened the family as a dynamic system and the FLP as negotiated among family members.

In the final article, Cassie Smith-Christmas provides an example of research on heritage through the microlevel of identity construction in family interaction that links up to the macrolevel of historical language politics in Scotland. In her study of a family who speaks Scottish Gaelic on the Isle of Skye, she focuses on Seumas, the English-dominant uncle of the Campbell family. While he expresses a positive orientation towards Gaelic and embraces it as a form of heritage tied to Skye in a primordial fashion, in interactions with the youngest generation, he continually frames Gaelic in terms of 'tradition' and the stances he takes tend to portray this language as one that is to be associated with older speakers and with ways of the past. The language is thereby romanticized and linked to antiquated notions of 'heritage.' In addition, Smith-Christmas argues that the fact that Seumas speaks Gaelic as part of his "uncle" identity vis-à-vis the children, and not part of his other identities, such as "cool bloke" or "businessman" socializes the children into seeing Gaelic as an adult-*to*-child language, rather than one that is relevant for many purposes. The result is that Gaelic is restricted ideologically through everyday interactions in the home.

In sum, the five papers in this volume offer illustrations of many forms of dynamism in the family that diversity the notion of heritage. Linguistic forms themselves can be contested, whether families are negotiating FLPs in indigenous or diasporic contexts, and the forms that are embraced may well differ quite a lot from the linguistic norms of previous generations.

Language ideologies fluctuate as well in response to family members' past and future experiences and imagined possibilities. As Li Wei and Zhu Hua show, attachments to imagined returns to countries of origin can result in the maintenance of language in the present, without ever achieving the imagined return. In all cases, we see how multiple and varied the concept of heritage can be in the family, a finding which should inform related questions about whether and to what degree language transmission is 'succesful' and what maintaining a language really means in terms of maintaining a family's past affiliations and identities.

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