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Author(s): Curdt-Christiansen, Xiao Lan; Palviainen, Åsa

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#### Introduction

Ten years ago, the first thematic issue of Family Language Policy, edited by Curdt-Christiansen (2013), was published in Language Policy. As one of the first special issues on this particular topic, it sparked a great deal of interest in FLP, contributing to the establishment of a key field of scholarship (Curdt-Christiansen 2009; King, Fogle & Logan-Terry 2008; Spolsky 2012). In the past ten years, the study of FLP has flourished. Topics within the field covers a variety of issues, from why parents/caregivers make certain decisions (e.g. Curdt-Christiansen 2016, 2018; King et al. 2008) to what they do with the different languages and what roles these languages play in people's everyday life (Lanza 2007; Mirvahedi 2021; Palviainen & Kedra 2020; Zhu Hua & Li Wei 2016) as well as what types of FLP contribute to children's linguistic outcomes (De Houwer 2007; Dekeyser & Stevens 2019; Hollebeke et al. 2020, 2022; Schwartz 2008) and how families manage their different languages to meet formal educational demands and cultural/emotional needs (e.g., Curdt-Christiansen 2013; Curdt-Christiansen & Iwaniec 2023; Curdt-Christiansen & LaMorgia 2018; Palviainen & Bergroth 2018; Sevinç & Mirvahedi 2023; Tannenbaum 2012). These topics critically address not only how languages are used in different sociolinguistic and sociocultural contexts, but also how FLP is shaped by the status of minority and majority languages. Along with the diversified topics, different types of family constellations in different geographical settings have also been included in the scope of FLP investigation (e.g., Wright & Higgins 2022). The field has been broadened and strengthened by publications in special issues (e.g., Curdt-Christiansen & Lanza 2018; Curdt-Christiansen & Gao 2021; Lanza & Curdt-Christiansen 2018; Lanza & Li Wei 2016; Sevinç & Mirvahedi 2023; Van Mensel & De Meulder 2021) and book volumes (e.g., Wright & Higgins 2022; Schwartz & Verschik 2013; Smith-Christmas 2016).

While these publications have enhanced our understanding of "the processes of language shift and change" and "shed lights on broader language policy issues" in societies at different levels (Curdt-Christiansen 2013: 1), we are still puzzled by long-standing issues of language and power, and by recurring questions such as: Why do some transnational families maintain their language and others lose it? How is language practice associated with societal power? Why is it important to continue the development of heritage languages? What is the

relationship between family language policy and national language policy? And how do broader societal ideologies shape individuals' linguistic practices and contribute to the continued use or loss of the home language? The field of FLP becomes more intricate by the heightened political crisis and war in Europe and the Middle East as well as the complexity of "new communication technologies and their intensified uses and changes taking place in the political and economic landscape of different regions of the world" (Lanza & Lomeu Gomes 2022: 163). These new challenges brought about by the ongoing changes in sociolinguistic, sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts would need to be addressed with the help of new theoretical lenses, different epistemological stances as well as new and different types of data.

## Why this special issue?

This thematic issue highlights recent development in family language policy by addressing some of the long-standing issues and new challenges faced by families in various geopolitical contexts. By studying the recurrent sociolinguistic issues of language shift and language change, the special issue brings 'new' perspectives on FLP to the forefront. There are three main themes emerging in and across the SI contributions: *theoretical framing, critical approaches to new challenges in FLP*, and *methodological approaches to FLP*.

### Theoretical Framing

# Raciolinguistics and FLP

Raciolinguistics explores the relationship between language use and the construction of race, and examines how concepts of race shape language use and language practices (Alim 2016; Rosa and Flores 2017, 2021). The roots of racialised discourses derive from socially constructed perceptions of 'differences' that are based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion and sociocultural practices. Racialised populations, such as migrants, people of indigenous background, and other minoritised groups, tend to encounter experiences of prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Curdt-Christiansen & Huang 2021; Cushing 2021; May 2023). May (2023: 2) points out that "acts of linguistic racism are imbued with and embedded within a sociohistorical and sociopolitical confluence of racialisation, colonisation, and modern nation building." Such acts can be reflected in different attitudes and linguistic practices in the family that are shaped by these broader social discourses and official language policies at the macro- and meso-level (Curdt-Christiansen 2016). Schools, for example, can sanction the use

of 'unstandardised' L1 and minority languages through explicit policies in formal educational documents (Cushing 2019). Sociocultural practices in public domains can promote dominant language through covert raciolinguistic discourse (e.g., Mu 2018). These different forms of raciolinguistic acts in various settings are "characterized by the ideological assumption that racialised subjects' language practices are unfit" (Rosa & Flores 2020: 93) for formal education and public use. Such stigmatising perceptions establish minority languages' sociopolitical status, reinforces the linguistic hierarchy, and exacerbates social/linguistic/cultural differences between groups, ethnicities, and classes. The ideological assumption, highlighted by Rosa and Flores above, has inevitably shaped majority and minority language users' attitudes towards and use of racialised languages, sometimes in school contexts and at other times at home, determining the fate of the minority languages.

While linguistic racism has been a focus within the broader field of applied linguistics in recent years, it has not been widely and conceptually explored by scholars of FLP. Most FLP studies, to-date, are underpinned by Spolsky's (2009) tripartite model of language policy with three interrelated components: language ideology, language practice, and language management. Language ideology as a key construct has not, however, been given much attention from the raciolinguistic perspective. Through the lens of raciolinguistics in family contexts, we can gain much understanding of the persistent issues of language shift and language loss, the relationship between language practices at home and language policies in schools, as well as inequalities between language status and power.

This thematic issue is situated within the broad theoretical framing of sociolinguistics in which two of the papers are directly guided by raciolinguistics theory. **Curdt-Christiansen, Li Wei and Zhu Hua** examine the experiences of pride, prejudice and struggles that many migrant and transnational families encounter when dealing with everyday life involving minority and heritage languages (HL) in diasporic contexts. Specifically, they explore how family language practices, ideologies and management activities are conditioned by the sociopolitical environment, filled with linguistic prejudice and hierarchy, that may (and does often) compel minority language shift. Through a questionnaire, they asked 470 transnational families in England about the ideological constructs of 'pride', 'prejudice' and 'pragmatism' and found that they lead to different language practices and management activities in these transnational families. The constructs of 'pride', 'prejudice' and 'pragmatism' are conceptualised through the lens of raciolinguistics in which 'pride' is often framed as the ability to speak a minority language, which provides a means for identity work and a sense of belonging. 'Prejudice' is often rooted in a raciolinguistic ideology or an

intolerance of differences in language, race, culture and values. And 'pragmatism' depicts the ways in which transnational families give in to overt and covert linguistic racism, reflected in raciolinguistic ideologies in schools and prejudicial discourses in public. Their study is substantiated by interview data from the Chinese and Polish communities in which families recount how they experienced struggles and challenges in HL maintenance and encountered linguistic 'othering' through school policing which they tend to accept as normalised practices. Guided by the conceptual framework of raciolinguistics, the authors call for more research to explore how institutionally sanctioned language practices and raciolinguistic ideologies are shaping (and shaped by) FLP in multilingual societies.

Mirvahedi highlights the tensions between the desired host-societal identity and racial differences in Afghan refugee families in Norway. Adopting Kitarō Nishida's (1870–1945) notion of historical body, he examined how these families' forced migration experiences in different countries gave them a false and illusionary national and cultural identity which directly affected their language ideologies and practices to align with Norwegian identity. In reality, however, both children and parents had been denied the 'politics of recognition' because of their racialised bodies and the racial differences featured in their skin and hair colour. Such differences have been the source of raciolinguistic discourses in schools and society. Feeling vulnerable, these Afghan families had to negotiate their self-claimed identity as Norwegian with the racialised body of Afghans.

#### Other critical lenses and FLP

In addition to raciolinguistics, other critical approaches to FLP from different theoretical perspectives have been addressed in the issue by Palviainen and Räisä, Baoqi Sun et al., Nelson et al., and Seals and Beliaeva. These contributions deal with important issues of FLP in relation to national language policy and language-in-education policy in schools (Menken & García 2010; Pérez-Milans & Tollefson 2018). These powerful policies, through their 'official' voice and legislative regulation, establish the status of the 'official language' and shape people's attitudes towards different languages. In countries with a colonial history, these policies tend to privilege the language of the colonial power by emphasising neoliberal ideologies (e.g., May 2023; Pennycook & Makoni 2020). Such neoliberal valorisations have posed insurmountable difficulties for parents, youths and children to make a convincing argument for using minoritised, endangered and indigenous languages. These languages may have a 'official national' language status, but in reality, the 'official national' status and the right to mother tongue languages are theoretical exercises. The deep-rooted colonial ideology

still remains in the broader society and continues to influence schools, families and society at large, legitimating dominant languages and restricting minoritised languages to limited use.

Very often, minoritised language users have little or insufficient literacy ability.

The paper by **Palviainen and Räisä** is situated in the bilingual constitutional context of Finland where Finish and Swedish are the official languages. With the increasing number of migrants and refugees in Finland, languages other than Swedish and Finnish (LOTSF) become more visible. While the children of LOTSF background have a right to mother tongue (MT) education, MT instruction is an extracurricular activity, depending on the availability of qualified teachers and the number of students. Having examined a large set of survey data from 1,002 children in Swedish-medium schools, the authors question this 'right to MT' curriculum policy, stating that institutional constraints make the formal education facilities insufficient to develop minority languages in Finland. This lack of support has had a negative effect on family language practices in digitally-mediated written communication, and by extension, hampered multilingual and multiliteracy development.

Located in the multilingual context of Mexico, **Nelson et al.**'s paper explores young adults' (n=172; 15-25 years old) linguistic trajectories over time and space in relation to different political events (e.g., Trump's deportation policy), and internal and external migration movements. They argue that despite the multilingual resources at their disposal and the pro-multilingual language policy at the national level, in which 68 indigenous languages are given 'national language' status, language ideologies inherited from colonial settlers still prevail. These youths perceive their language abilities and practices with reference to the implicit and explicit language actions from their family and community with regard to the status of Indigenous language as well as the dominant position of Spanish and English in the wider society. The findings illustrate that the presence of different languages in the ecological context of Mexico is always ideology-laden, infused with raciolinguistic undertones and paradoxes.

Similarly, **Sun** et al.'s paper addresses the issues of individual bilingualism in the multilingual context of Singapore. They examine various types of FLP from two bilingual groups of children (9-12 years old) in Singapore, Chinese-English (n=2,971), and Malay-English (n=780). Regression analyses reveal differential effects of language beliefs, practices, and management on reading enjoyment and amount of reading in the children's two languages. Despite holding similar language beliefs about English and MT, neither group of children are, so the authors argue, in the process of reversing the language shift phenomenon in Singapore. Their study points out that the children's role in constructing 'family life' is

constrained by the national language policy that favours the English language. Imbued with the colonial history, the policy reproduces raciolinguistic ideologies through the national education system that shapes the children's MT development.

The participants in **Seals and Beliaeva**'s study are three Ukrainian families living in the diaspora of New Zealand. The focus of this study is on their Aspirational FLP, defined as a complex and dynamic set of ideal family language practices and management strategies to achieve their imagined future identities for themselves and/or other family members. The analyses of interviews carried out in 2014 and 2021 showed not only the complexity of negotiating family language practices in a diaspora with a dominant language (English) and heritage languages (Ukrainian and/or Russian), but also how changes in language ideologies and attitudes in their former homeland Ukraine had affected their practiced and aspirational FLPs over time.

## Critical approaches to new challenges in FLP

New challenges, faced by families and manifested in various aspects, include new technologies and digital practices, ongoing political crisis in the global south, new patterns of migration, as well as dynamics and individual agency within families.

### Digital practices and literacy

The paper by **Palviainen and Räisä** examines the role of digital practices for their participants' (9-12 years old) everyday family life. The authors maintain that, although digital communication between family members has been well studied in recent years, it has not been the focus in FLP. Their study demonstrates that digitally mediated communications are common in families in which both monolingual and multilingual practices are found in different modalities and through different mobile-phone messaging apps. One of the key findings is that minority language speaking children, especially those who speak Arabic, Russian, Somali, Swahili, Thai and Vietnamese, tend to use spoken modes of communication more to avoid linguistically encoded written language. The authors argue that while mediated family language communication can benefit most children in terms of incidental language learning and literacy, it does not provide the same literacy benefits for minority language students because of the limited opportunity for developing minority language literacy.

In a similar vein, **Nelson et al.** also find that Mexican youths use more spoken modes of communication with their family members when it involves indigenous languages. Literacy development in indigenous languages, like in other colonial contexts, faces discrimination that leads to language shift to the dominant language. This is reflected through their use of a trajectory approach in which they capture the young adults' language practices over time and space. Their findings highlight the tensions between family-desired loyalty to indigenous languages and the hegemonic power of dominant languages in society through their linguistic and life trajectories.

# Childrens' perspectives

In recent FLP literature, there has been a consistent call for more children or young people's perspectives and their role in FLP (e.g., Lanza & Lomeu Gomes 2020; Palviainen 2020). This important perspective has been addressed in the articles by **Sun et al.**, **Palviainen and Räisä**, and **Nelson et al.** Each paper contributes to the critical element of child agency in different ways. **Sun et al.'s** paper examines how primary school children perceive their family language practices and the different language investments provided by their parents in relationship to leisure reading in MT and English. The contribution by **Palviainen and Räisä** focuses on which digital apps, through what modalities, and in which languages children communicate with their parents. **Nelson et al.**'s paper highlights the linguistic trajectory through the lens of young adults. These contributions have not only provided us with critical understandings of the wide spectrum of FLPs, but also enabled us to understand their agentive role in 'doing family' and shaping FLP.

## Political crisis and new patterns of migration

While the collection of papers in the issue mostly deals with minority groups and diasporic communities in WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic) countries, they also capture how recent political crises and forced migration affect collective and individual identities in relation to family language planning. Using narrative enquiries, **Seals and Beliaeva** explore how the Russo-Ukrainian War has made Ukrainian migrants in New Zealand reassess their FLP regarding what heritage languages they would invest in at home. Their study focuses on how such a reassessment changed over a seven-year period (2014-2021) and how Ukrainian identity was reenforced because of the war. **Mirvahedi**'s paper addresses FLP dynamics over time and space amidst the forced migration of Afghan refugee

families in Norway. He explores how parents' lived experiences in different countries and refugee camps influenced their language planning decisions for their children's future and identity. The study carried out by **Curdt-Christiansen et al.** shows how migrant families under the pressure of monolingual ideologies change their language practices when their children enter nursery and school. FLP dynamics are further complicated by **Nelson et al.**'s study, which includes returnees from the US to Mexico under the Trump regime. The stories from these participants provide powerful illustrations of their journey of language loss, change and transformation.

In sum, the new challenges faced by families either in WEIRD countries or the global south have been addressed in the special issue, responding to current political conflicts and migration patterns. New approaches to these challenges have enriched the field of FLP and expanded the scope of FLP studies.

# Methodological approaches to FLP

In addition to focusing on ecological and sociolinguistic factors of FLP, the contributors also employ different methodological approaches to make sense of FLP in globally dispersed, transnational and multilingual populations. Their studies reflect different epistemological stances that guide these researchers to examine decision-making processes in FLP. These epistemological perspectives have enabled them to approach different populations/families and employ different research methods from a 'wide angle lens' to a 'focal lens' to capture the dynamics and multiple levels of FLP. Contributions from Curdt-Christiansen et al., Sun et al., Palviainen and Räisä, and Nelson et al. employ large-scale questionnaires to examine patterns of social change in relation to language and literacy practices that are conditioned by social structures, national policies and on-going changes. To complement the 'wide angles', the authors also apply methods of 'focal lens' capturing the changes over time and space experienced by the families. Nelson et al. and Mirvahedi, for example, use narrative enquiries to document the pains and gains of parents and young adults, illustrating critical moments in their lives for making language decisions. Seals and Beliaeva and Curdt-Christiansen et al. use narrative interviews and ethnographic oriented social interactions to understand different internal and external factors as well as family dynamics shaping FLPs. Whereas Curdt-Christiansen et al., Mirvahedi, and Nelson et al. asked their participants to talk about their past and present, providing retrospective views on the development of FLP over time and space, Seals and Beliaeva's diachronic design with two interviews with the

same participants with a six-year interval made it possible to track the changes and dynamics over time.

#### How do we move forward?

Ten years have passed since the first thematic issue on Family Language Policy was published in *Language Policy* in 2013. That issue responded to the sociocultural changes of transnational movement from "three new perspectives" (Curdt-Christiansen 2013: 2): the contingent relationships between FLP and wider political, social, educational and economic forces; ethnographically grounded approaches to understand processes of language shift; and the range of family types in different cultural contexts.

Ten years later, this current thematic issue has maintained and further developed the "three new perspectives" to provide a more holistic picture of how language(s) are learned, used and perceived in different sociocultural and geopolitical contexts. It has deepened our understanding of the persistent and long-lasting problems of social inequality in any given society. Most importantly, it has shed lights on issues of language status, language power and language values from raciolinguistic theory and other critical perspectives. Methodologically, it included diverse approaches from quantitative and survey to qualitative and ethnographic methods. Contextually, it has included different types of families from both the global north and south. In addition, the current issue has responded to several of the calls for FLP research made by Palviainen and colleagues (e.g., Palviainen 2020; Palviainen & Kedra 2020; Lexander & Androutsopoulos 2023) and Higgins and Wright (2022) to take into account digitally-mediated family communication and its influence on minority/heritage languages and literacy development. Ideologically, it has added children's and young adults' perspectives to capture the dynamics of FLP.

The field has expanded and entered into a new phase where heightened global levels of political and military conflict and transnational movement are taking place and new communication technologies are constantly evolving. Palviainen (2020:243) argues that "simply adding more cases to the cumulative body of FLP data is not enough." In order to move the field forward, we need to study FLP-related issues from critical perspectives theoretically, understand family as a critical domain epistemologically, and use interdisciplinary methods to investigate FLP methodologically. Adding more cases and expanding research scopes, having new data and including more diverse family types from non-WEIRD contexts, such as Africa, South Asia, Middle East, South America, and the Pacific, are some of the measures to advance the field. But most importantly, we need to

understand FLP by identifying the roots of language attitudes and the consequences of language ideology.

To advance the field, we call for more interdisciplinary approaches to studying FLP. These include synergies from literacy studies, digital communication, sociolinguistics, intercultural pragmatics, policy research, education, political science, migration studies, psychology, and sociology.

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