

Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen* and Francesca La Morgia **Managing heritage language development: Opportunities and challenges for Chinese, Italian and Pakistani Urdu-speaking families in the UK**

<https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2017-0019>

Abstract: Drawing on theories of family language policy and literacy environment, this inquiry explores and describes how family language policy is managed through literacy resources and literacy related activities in transnational families in the UK. A total of 66 families, each with at least one child between the age of 2 and 8, participated in this study. All children spoke English alongside their heritage/home language (HL), either Chinese, Italian, or Urdu. Data sources include: (a) a questionnaire about the children's general background and the parents' socio-economic and cultural capital and language practice in English and HL; (b) literacy resources and activities in both HL and English; (c) interview with parents. The results of this study show some interesting differences among Italian, Urdu and Chinese speakers, not only in their family language practices, but also in their attitudes towards mother tongue literacy and application of literacy practices in the home language. Although parental language management efforts were motivated by their aspirations to enrich their children's language repertoires, the different degrees of variation in family language input indicate that sociocultural and socio-political realities present difficulties and constraints that prevent families from developing literacy in the home language.

Keywords: family language policy, language management, Chinese community, Italian community, home literacy environment, Urdu-speaking Pakistani community

1 Introduction

In the UK, according to the School Census conducted by the Department for Education, one in six or 612,160 primary school pupils come from

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transcultural/transnational families (NALDIC news 2013). These families consist of 7.5 million people who live mainly in big cities where they form vibrant ethnic, linguistic and transcultural communities with different migration histories and distinctive linguistic practices. But how do these families contribute to the vitality of ethnolinguistic communities and UK's 'superdiversity' (Vertovec 2007), what beliefs do they have about the different languages involved in their daily encounters, and most importantly what do parents/caregivers do to ensure the continuity of their heritage language (HL) and cultural practices while meeting the demands of public education in English? In sum, in what ways do they contribute to their children's bilingual/multilingual development?

This article seeks to answer these questions by looking into how transnational families in the UK manage children's HL and English development in three communities - Chinese, Italian and Urdu-speaking Pakistani. It focuses on how the ideologies and aspirations of parents shape the measures and strategies of their management plan as they bring up their children in more than one language. Language management in this context refers to the deliberate language planning efforts made by caregivers through literacy resources and activities. While recent studies into Family Language Policy (FLP) have explored how parental language ideologies as underlying forces influence parental decisions on which language to practice in their home (Curdtt-Christiansen 2009; Curdtt-Christiansen 2016; Fogle and King 2013; Okita 2002), more studies are needed to understand how broader societal attitudes and educational demands shape parents' aspirations and expectations of their children's bilingual development, thus influencing parental conscious planning activities.

As part of FLP, language management is an important field of investigation as it determines how languages are transmitted across generations and under what conditions a language is maintained or lost (Fishman 2004). Studies into language management can enhance our understanding of how intergenerational transmission takes place and what driving forces provide resistance or submission to this transmission. Critically, it highlights the importance of the *conscious choice* of the linguistic measures and literacy practices in shaping the *unconscious process* of linguistic and cultural transmission in transnational families. While acknowledging the role children play in the negotiation of family language policy, we focus in this paper on the role of parents in carrying out the observable language planning activities in their homes.

2 Language management and home literacy practices

In his classic model of language policy, Spolsky (2004; 2009) conceptualises *Language Management* as a sub-component of language policy, which also consists of language practice and language ideology. Language management is defined as “the explicit and observable efforts by a person or a group that either has or claims authority over the participants in a domain to modify their language practices or beliefs” (Spolsky 2009: 4). This model has been criticised for lacking “a realm-based understanding of the world” (Sanden 2014: 13), thus assuming a universal applicability to all sociolinguistic situations. Therefore, the framework tends to provide generic language management concepts, but does not explain how planning processes come into play with different forces, and how these forces are related to one another (Schwartz 2010). When it comes to a family domain, the model fails to account for the specific mechanisms or measures that parents use to manage their home languages (Curdts-Christiansen 2014; Ren and Hu 2013). In this regard, we define language management as “the implicit/explicit and subconscious/deliberate parental involvement and investment in providing linguistic conditions and context for language learning and literacy development” (Curdts-Christiansen 2012: 57).

This definition complements the theoretical framework by taking into consideration home literacy practices as part of language management measures. In this regard, language planning activities are consciously designed and motivated by caregivers’ past experiences, current projections of their children’s language needs, and future-oriented aspirations.

Home literacy scholars focus on home environments, parental involvement, and different forms of family capital to explain multilingual children’s literacy development (Dixon and Wu 2014; Senechal 2011). Home environments include both culturally related practices, such as cultural traditions and rituals (Schwartz 2010), and literacy related resources, such as books, educational games, literacy playing materials and access to a library; parental involvement includes formal and informal literacy activities, such as reading to and reading with children (shared book reading), explicit teaching reading, homework help, and discussing children’s school work and experiences with them (Edwards 2007; Neuman et al. 2008; Senechal 2011). Family capitals consist of physical, human (parental education) and social capitals that can be transformed into educational attainment of children (Coleman 1988; Li 2007).

The importance of children’s home environments as contributors to their literacy development is evidenced through both quantitative and qualitative

studies. For example, correlation studies have demonstrated that when a home environment is rich in literacy materials and when parents or family members frequently read books together with them, children's literacy development is enhanced (Schwartz et al. 2013; Senechal 2011). In a five-year longitudinal study involving 168 children from single-track (English language) schools in Canada, S  n  chal and LeFevre (2002) showed that parental involvement in children's exposure to books at home is strongly related to vocabulary development and listening comprehension skills, which directly contribute to children's reading skills in lower primary grades (1–3).

Much of quantitative home literacy research tends to focus on English language as L2 development in immigrant children. Farver et al. (2013), for example, have studied 392 Latino families of preschool children in the US. They found that parents' literacy activities in English, including reading to children and playing rhyming games, contributed to their children's English vocabulary. A few studies have examined the role of family literacy support and home language input in achieving additive bilingualism for children in immigrant households. Studies conducted by L  pez et al. (2007) found that parental involvement, such as reading to children and parents' personal and work-related use of literacy, predicted children's early Spanish literacy and English oral proficiency in kindergarten. With regard to HL development, Schwartz's (2008) study of Russian–Hebrew elementary school children (mean age 7:2) showed that HL literacy in both families and other informal settings played a crucial role for HL development. Interestingly, children's positive attitudes towards HL led to better vocabulary knowledge whereas parents' attitudes had little effect. Similarly, Kang (2015) investigated immigrant children's heritage language development. Using a web-based questionnaire, she explored the relationship between FLP and HL maintenance in 698 Korean families in the US. Her study showed that language management strategies, such as number of books in Korean, reading for pleasure or watching TV in Korean, strongly predict the development of literacy skills in their HL.

Qualitative studies have shown that adults in families play an instrumental role in establishing FLP and contributing to HL development (Anderson et al. 2010; Curdt-Christiansen 2013; Mui and Anderson 2008). In her comparative study of multilingual Chinese children in Canada and Singapore, Curdt-Christiansen (2013) demonstrated that literacy resources, such as story books, various non-fictional texts and assessment workbooks can provide children with both structured and non-structured ways to engage in bilingual development. Importantly, her study revealed that adults can shape children's multilingual development by establishing an implicit and imperceptible FLP where literacy activities become part of everyday lived experiences.

Parental aspirations and expectations are the most important predictors for a positive HL development in FLP, which is expressed by parental beliefs and goals for their children's multilingual development and educational outcomes (Curdt-Christiansen 2009; Louie 2004). In a study of Chinese immigrant children in Singapore, Ren and Hu (2013) showed that language management activities tend to be related to children's language needs in their academic performance at school. They found that parents change their attitude toward the HL, based on their children's language proficiency in school subjects (primarily English language), which subsequently shapes their aspirations and planned activities for their children's academic as well as literacy development. In studying bilingual and trilingual children's literacy practices in Canada, Riches and Curdt-Christiansen (2010) found that the aspirations and expectations of parents were rooted in their cultural beliefs about education, which may lead to parental involvement in home literacy activities as reflected in their self-created homework and tutored learning sessions.

Parental aspirations, whether rooted in cultural beliefs or expressed as academic expectations, tend to be associated with broader society attitudes and public discourse about migration, diversity and language-in-education policy. Spolsky (2009) argues that there are multiple forces in a given society that influence parents' decisions about their family language use and language choices. Although most external forces, including government policy (Curdt-Christiansen 2014; Curdt-Christiansen 2016; Lane 2010) and economic pressures, do not directly specify what families can do and what languages they can speak in their own homes, these forces are often reflected in the public discourse, which has great effect on family members' attitudes towards certain minority groups and their languages. Such attitudes, when developed negatively, reaffirms their beliefs about the values, roles and functions of different languages (De Fina 2012; King and De Fina 2010), which, in turn, can greatly affect the chance of those languages to be spoken, and literacy skills to be taught and developed.

3 The study

This study is located in Reading, a large town in Southern England. With a population of 318,014 (2011 census), Reading is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse towns in the UK. Among this diversified population, 25.3% describe themselves as 'non-white' and 9.5% consider themselves as 'non-British white' (2014 census). In 2010, it was reported that Reading has 150 different spoken languages (Slater 2010). Given these demographic and

linguistic characteristics, there is an urgent and compelling need to explore what linguistic environments parents provide for their children and what language management efforts they make to raise bilingual children.

We have chosen three ethnolinguistic and cultural communities - Chinese, Italian and Urdu-speaking Pakistani - for their distinctive socio-political contexts of migration, demographic characters and linguistic practices. Consisting of both established and newly formed communities, they represent the larger immigrant populations in the UK with different migration histories, economic conditions and educational backgrounds.

The Chinese, for example, are one of the largest and longest-established migrant communities in the UK (Wei and Hua 2014). The Chinese community in Reading includes both long-term settled and recently established populations who come from different regions and home countries and speak a variety of Chinese languages. Many of the recent immigrants are skilled professionals who work in the IT industry. Regardless of the migration patterns and parents' professions, Chinese have been reported to adhere to certain cultural values, such as high aspirations for education and high expectations for academic success (Francis, Archer, and Mau 2010; Zhou and Kim 2006). With regard to learning and developing Chinese as a HL, it is reported that parents consider it an instrumental tool to socialise their children into beliefs about education and learning attitudes (Archer and Francis 2007; Gates and Guo 2014).

The Italian community in Reading has a relatively young population in which most of the families consider themselves expats. Most of the research on Italian migrants is set in Canada and the US, or on older generations of migrants in the UK (Guzzo 2014). To our knowledge, no study set in England has yet focused on the family language policy implemented by parents who have recently migrated from Italy to the UK.

As one of the largest communities in the UK, Pakistani Urdu-speakers consist of large numbers of British-born Pakistanis, and some Pakistan-born immigrants. The Pakistani community has gone through a different pattern of migratory trajectory. Largely migrating for economic reasons, the earlier migrants arrived in the 1950s and 60s (The Change Institute 2009). Today, the community has a large number of British-born third generation young people who speak English as a first language (Census 2011). While the second generation adopts hybrid identities such as 'British Pakistani', the third generation identify themselves strongly as British (Valentine 2005). Despite their strong affinity with British, recent studies suggest that many young Pakistanis feel rejected and excluded from British society as a consequence of Islamophobia, negative publicity and the general perception of Muslims (Crozier and Davies 2008; Yougov 2013). In Reading, the Pakistanis form the third largest ethnic

group, according to Census 2011. While there has been research into ethnicity and identity of Pakistanis in recent years, few studies have given attention to how Pakistani caregivers engage with their children in language and literacy activities in family domains.

Our study fills this gap by comparing the long established Pakistani community and the recent migrants in the Chinese and Italian communities. We aim to identify the ideological and institutional underpinnings that shape parents’ involvements in their children’s language and literacy development across these three communities. In what follows, we describe the participating families.

3.1 Participants

Participants involved in this study were families with at least one child aged between 2 and 8 years (N=66). Of these, 28 were Chinese, 28 Italian and 10 Pakistani. These families were recruited through various means – online networks, heritage language schools, community associations and personal contacts. Our inclusion criteria were that all family members spoke both English and their respective heritage language. The cross-community data enabled us to understand how commonalities and differences in communities and families shape the various language management activities and planning efforts.

By means of a survey, we were able to obtain the basic demographic information about the participating children and the parental education level as well as socio-economic status (SES). Tables 1 and 2 present the profiles of the children and their parents, respectively.

As shown in Table 1, a total of 31 girls and 35 boys were involved in the study as focal participants. Among them, 29 went to primary school, 28 attended nursery or preschool, and nine children from Chinese families were cared for at home and did not attend nursery. Four children from the Urdu-speaking Pakistani families attended a half-day nursery programme.

Table 1: Children’s profile.

	<3 years	3–5 years	> 5 years	Girl		Boy		Birth Place			Primary	Nursery	Homecare
								UK	Homeland	Oth.			
Chinese	10	10	8	13	15	19*		9**	1***		12	7	9
Italian	5	15	8	13	15	23*		4**	1***		11	17	0
Urdu	0	4	6	5	5	10*		0**	0***		6	4	4
Total	15	29	22	31	35	52		13	2		29	28	9/(4)

Birth place: *UK; **home country; ***other place; ****Part Time (half day programme).

Table 2: Parental Information (in raw numbers).

	Postgrad		Undergrad		Middle Sch		Primary Sch.		Occupation							
	M*	F*	M	F	M	F	M	F	Profess.	Administr.	Service	Homemaker				
Chinese	13	16	9	8	6	4	0	0	7	20	0	1	1	6	20	1
Italian	12	9	9	11	5	7	2	1	10	19	8	2	3	7	7	0
Urdu	0	0	4	7	6	3	0	0	2	3	1	4	1	4	5	0
Total	25	25	22	26	17	14	2	1	19	42	9	7	5	17	32	1

M*: mother; F*: father.

The parents who participated in this study were generally well-educated. As shown in Table 2, 38% of the parents had a postgraduate degree and 34 % a university degree. Interestingly, the number of mothers from the Chinese and Italian communities who had postgraduate degrees was equal to that of the fathers. The high percentage of well-educated parents reflects the global trend in the job market where a well-educated workforce is in high demand. Similarly, the percentage of parents who held a professional job reached 42%. Twenty Chinese mothers but only seven Italian mothers were home-makers despite many of them having obtained higher education. In the Pakistani Urdu-speaking families, the parents’ educational level was generally lower than that of the parents from the Chinese and Italian groups.

In addition, it needs to be noted that in most of the Chinese and Pakistani Urdu-speaking Pakistani families both spouses spoke the same language, whereas in 13 out of the 28 Italian families, only one parent spoke Italian.

3.2 Data sources

This paper is based on data collected through two means: (1) a questionnaire survey with items that describe linguistic practice and home literacy environment; and (2) interviews with selected families.

3.2.1 The survey

The survey questionnaire was prepared in English and then translated into Chinese and Italian by the authors. To ensure comparability between English and Chinese, and English and Italian, the survey was translated back into

English and incomparable items and language specific items (e.g. Chinese pinyin, characters) were re-examined. No translation was made into Urdu as these parents preferred to complete the survey in English. The survey covers four components: (1) background information (see Tables 1 and 2), (2) language practice, (3) language management as measured by home literacy environment, and (4) parental expectations.

1. *Background information* was collected, including age and place of birth, number of children, parents' educational level and place of education, occupation and household income.
2. *Language practice* contained four items, where parents were asked to indicate how often English was used between them, from parents to children, between siblings, and from children to other family members, such as grandparents and aunts/uncles.
3. *Home literacy environment* consisted of nine items, asking about the number of children's books in English and in the HL, the number of hours allowed for TV watching and in which language, independent play with educational games, parental reading habits, frequency of library visit, and shared book reading.
4. *Parental expectations* had 11 items, asking parents about how important it was for their children to achieve, before starting Grade 1, the following benchmarks: recognise the letters of the alphabet, write the letters, read some words in English; with regard to HL, benchmarks included: read and write 10–20 words, write names, communicate in HL.

Like with all self-reported data, there is always a question of reliability. Especially with regard to language practices, we acknowledge that the data are less reliable as it is difficult to give an accurate measure of the percentage of language use at home. In order to reduce this inherent weakness, we conducted follow-up interviews which are discussed below.

3.2.2 Interview

In order to understand the multi-dimensions of the families' social world, we asked parents to volunteer for an in-depth interview after they had completed the survey. Although the responses were enthusiastic (25 Chinese and 20 Italians volunteered), we interviewed only ten families in each community. The main aim of the interview was to elicit parental beliefs about the languages in their life, their aspirations, and the challenges of raising bilingual children in the UK. Depending on parents' time frame and availability, interviews were conducted in

either heritage language schools, community centres or during home visits. Most interviews, lasting from 20 minutes to two hours, were carried out in the HL with occasional codeswitching in the Chinese and Italian families.

4 Findings

4.1 Language practice

The linguistic practices in the family domain can illuminate the process of language change and the patterns of language practices determined by family members' conscious or unconscious choices. In Table 3, a descriptive distribution of parental responses concerning patterns of English language use is presented. As language use in these families involved only English and their respective HL, we requested parents to report only English language use. It was assumed that if English were used predominantly, then the HL would take a minor role.

As Table 3 shows, English, as the medium of interaction, has different roles in different communities. While it is not the primary medium of interaction for the Chinese parents, as 86.2% ($N = 25$) of them reported using less than 25% of English in their linguistic repertoire, it is the primary medium of interaction for some parents in the Italian and Pakistani families. This is most likely due to the inter-marriages of the Italian families and the length of residence in the UK for the Urdu-speaking Pakistani families. The percentage of English use from parents to children varied from less than 25% for the majority of the Chinese families to between 25–50% and, in as many cases, 50–75% for the Italian families, and to the much higher use (more than 50%) in the Urdu-speaking Pakistani families. As most Urdu-speaking parents are second and third generation immigrants, their language use patterns have already changed (The Change Institute 2009), which corresponds to findings in sociolinguistic studies across the globe (Fishman 2004; Wei 1994).

It is surprising to note that children in the Chinese families also tend to use less English when interacting with their siblings, as studies of intergenerational transmission have reported otherwise (Curd-Christiansen 2016; He 2013; He 2016). This may be explained by the children's delayed exposures to English and their young age, as nine out of the 28 children were cared for at home. With regard to the Italian families, children's English use was on the rise, as indicated by English taking up more than half of their language use in 32% of the children. In the Urdu-speaking Pakistani families, a clear language shift is noticeable as children's English use falls largely (90%) in the 75–100% range.

Table 3: Language Use in English (%).

Interaction	Chinese					Italian					Urdu					
	<25 %	26-50 %	51-75 %	75-100 %	<25 %	26-50 %	51-75 %	75-100 %	<25 %	26-50 %	51-75 %	75-100 %	<25 %	26-50 %	51-75 %	75-100 %
Between parents	86.2 %	0	0	0	10.3	42.9	7.1	42.9	20	50	30	0				
Parents to the child	86.2	0	0	0	10.3	43.3	23.3	6.7	0	50	20	30				
Child to siblings	69.6	4.3	8.7	4.3	4.3	16	12	8	0	0	10	90				
Child to other family member	86.2 %	0	0	0	10.3	42.9	0	42.9	0	60	40	0				

4.2 Language management: Home literacy environment

Parental involvement and children's literacy experiences, including language environments, reading practices and enrichment activities, have long been reported to have positive impact on children's academic experiences and learning (York and Loeb 2014). In the following section, we present the parental reports on home literacy environment and literacy activities, involving HL and English (see appendix).

As evidenced from the data, parents from all three communities allowed their children to watch TV in English language; however, the number of hours permitted varied. Whereas the majority of parents in the Chinese and Italian families allowed an hour every day during the week for English programmes, the Pakistani families, 1/3 of the Chinese and the Italian families allowed two or more hours. Although research has provided inconclusive findings about the role of TV in literacy development, many parents in this study considered TV an important tool for improving vocabulary and learning new linguistic structures in English. With regard to TV (video)-viewing of HL programmes, the numbers were drastically reduced. Whereas there were 14 Italian families that provided HL programmes for their children, there were only four Chinese families and no Pakistani families that did so. Such differences could be explained by the availability of the HL programmes in the UK, or parental beliefs in TV's negative effect on school work. However, in the context of HL as a non-dominant language environment, TV or videos in HL can actually provide much needed linguistic input for HL development (Kang 2015).

Similar results were also found with respect to educational games. The majority of Italian families reported engaging their children with games in both English (N=21) and Italian language (N=20), while the number for Chinese families in this regard was comparatively low as 17 families reported 0 hours engagement in English and 22 families did the same in Chinese. The Pakistani families were all engaged in English, but no one in the HL. It is also noticeable that, in general, Urdu-speaking families tended to allow three or more hours of TV-viewing and game-playing. This could be attributed to the diminishing functions of Urdu in their life as a result of long term immigration with second or even third generation parents. With regard to TV-viewing and game-playing, the parents may regard these activities as part of children's growing-up experiences.

The parental reading habit has long been identified as one of the important predictors of children's language and literacy development (August and Shanahan 2006; Landry et al. 2006). In this regard, we asked the parents to report the frequency of their own reading at home in both languages. While the

majority of parents in all three communities reported reading every day in English, only four Chinese parents and two Urdu-speaking Pakistani parents read every day in their respective HL.

Our data also showed that parents habitually read to their children as demonstrated by daily practices in English across all three communities – Chinese (N = 15), Italian (N = 13) and Pakistani (N = 6). When it came to HL, Italian families proved again to be the most active community where 15 families engaged in every day reading. Nine Chinese families and six Pakistani families answered that they never read to their children in HL. One explanation could be that the older participating children were not interested in being read to. Our data showed inconclusive patterns regarding children's reading independently at home. This may be caused by parents' interpretation of reading as being the capability of decoding, not as 'looking at picture books'.

Noticeable from the data was the uneven number of books in English and HL that children owned or had access to in their homes. Children from both Chinese and Italian families tended to own more books than their counterparts in the Urdu-speaking Pakistani families. The number of children who owned more than 50 English books included ten Chinese children and two Italian children. Children who owned 30–50 English books came mostly from the Italian families (N = 11), much fewer from the Chinese (N = 4) and Pakistani Urdu-speaking families (N = 1). Still the number of children who owned 10–30 English books was high with 12 from the Italian, eight from the Pakistani and six from the Chinese families. Compared to the number of English books owned by children, the number of HL books was small. There were only five Chinese and two Italian children who owned more than 50 HL books. Most children owned 10–30 HL books. Notably the number of children who had less than ten books was high: six from Chinese, eight from Italian and four from Pakistani families. Also worth noting was the number of children who owned zero HL books in the Chinese (N = 4) and Pakistani Urdu-speaking families (N = 4). One of the limitations of our data is that we did not capture the use of digital and social media such as iPads, Kindles or tablets in family literacy practice. Given that digital and social media play a vital role in contemporary life, this shortcoming needs to be addressed in future studies.

There was considerable variation in the frequency of visits to the library. Although most families visited libraries on a weekly basis, there were some children from both the Chinese and the Italian families who visited less than once per month, and four Chinese and six Italian children never visited the library at all. The reported data did not show whether the library visits were particularly HL related.

In sum, literacy environment and activities vary from community to community with Urdu-speaking Pakistani families providing fewer HL related literacy resources, Italian families providing almost equal resources in both languages, and Chinese families providing relatively more resources in English than in Chinese. These differences ultimately reflect their aspirations for their children in the respective languages as will be presented in the following section.

4.3 Aspirations and expectations

We measure parental aspirations and expectations based on how much literacy knowledge they expect their children to obtain upon entering grade 1. Since all three language groups use different writing systems in their respective HL, the items were phrased differently. For example, *know some letters* was changed to: know simple strokes in Chinese (一, |, J, 丶, 冫); and *know Arabic letters* in Urdu. For the item of *write own name* in HL for the Italian group, it was constructed as *know some commonly used words, such as colours, date, week, etc.*, as children’s names are written in the same script in Italian and in English. Although these items did not account for the underlying assumptions about parental expectations, they reflected implicitly how parents perceived the values of the languages in their children’s life. Table 4 shows the distribution of their expectations.

Table 4: Expectations*.

Aspiration	English			Heritage Language		
	Chinese	Italian	Urdu	Chinese	Italian	Urdu
Know some letters (ROMAN alphabet/Chinese characterS/Arabic alphabet)*	17	14	10	10	0	2
Know THE alphabet, ALL letters (Chinese characters are made of strokes/Arabic letters are written from right to left)	5	15	6	9	1	2
Write own names (for Italian: know some commonly used words – colours, date, week)***	5	15	11	10	18	3
Write all letters (write 10-20 Chinese characters)	5	14	1	9	7	1
Read a few words (read 20-30 Chinese words) (Italian: know context specific vocabULARY – sport, activity)	5	13	3	10	9	6
						1

*Open-ended space was also included in the survey which was discussed in the text below.

As observed in the distribution of literacy resources, most parents believed that it is very important to know some letters of the alphabet in English (Chinese $N = 17$; Italian $N = 14$ and Pakistani $N = 9$). The number of parents who considered it important to know some letters in HL fall to ten for the Chinese, 0 for the Italian (which uses the same Roman alphabet as English) and two for the Urdu-speaking Pakistani families. The same pattern was found with regard to their other expectations of the English language and HL.

Across the comparison between the groups, it is worth noting that Chinese parents and Urdu-speaking Pakistani parents seemed to have higher expectations of explicit reading and writing skills for their children whereas the Italian parents tended to give more emphasis on communicative abilities. In the open-ended comments at the end of the survey, the Italian parents expressed that they expected their children to “be able to communicate, understand and be understood”, “recognise letters” and “be able to draw, hold a pencil”. The Chinese parents saw more importance in formal literacy skills such as “comprehension ability”, “can speak in full sentences” and “calculation skills”. Most Urdu-speaking Pakistani parents placed greater emphasis on English literacy skills and viewed Urdu as a means for communication with grandparents. These expectations and beliefs also emerged through interviews, which we explore further in our discussion.

5 Discussion

In this study, we have explored through a comparative lens the efforts and measures employed by parents from three linguistically and culturally different minority language groups – Chinese, Italian and Pakistani. The evidence suggests that parents provided wide-ranging bilingual literacy resources and engage their children in multiple literacy activities. Their highly committed involvement in their children’s bilingual development demonstrates the important role of FLP in children’s language learning experience and HL maintenance. While the sample size of the Urdu-speaking Pakistani families is smaller than that of the other two sets of families, the data showed somewhat different linguistic practices and home literacy environment. In what follows, we provide a summary and discussion of three major differences across the three communities.

1) *De facto* linguistic practice

The regular and patterned language behaviours in the three groups show that Chinese families (> 86 %) tend to use HL most of the time among all family members with about 16 % reduced frequency between siblings (~70 %). The

Italian group's use of English was almost equally shared with that of Italian in their daily interactions, probably because of a relatively higher intermarriage rate. Half of the parents tended to use English with their children and the other half Italian, which showed a typical One-Parent-One-Language strategy. The patterns changed in the Urdu-speaking Pakistani families where the family members tended to use English more frequently. This tendency was particularly striking for the children as the data showed that nine out of ten children used English 76–100 % of the time and only one child used English 50–75 % of the time.

The language practice trends in these families related to a large degree to parental input patterns. In the Chinese family, more than 86 % of parents ($N = 25$) spoke Chinese most of the time to their children, which can be assumed to have shaped the children's language use pattern. The Italian families consisted of 13 intermarriage couples, who tended to use English between themselves. This seemed to have an impact on children's interactional patterns in different ways in which some children used more Italian and the majority used both English and Italian in their lives. All the Pakistani background children were born in the UK, and so were half of the parents. Except one father and one mother (from different families), the parents were either second or third generation immigrants. From the parental language behaviour patterns between themselves, it is noticeable that eight out of ten families spoke both English and Urdu, which strongly indicates that a shift had already taken place. While our data do not show the negotiation processes of language practice in their homes, the trend fits largely with what Fishman called the three-generation language loss model. Typically, the second- and third generation speakers show evidence of incomplete acquisition of linguistic structures of HL and retain much less functional command of their HL. This is also evidenced from a large institutional report which shows that second generations use increasingly English with their siblings at home (The Change Institute 2009). The results are consistent with findings from several other FLP studies (De Houwer 2007; Curdt-Christiansen 2016). De Houwer (2007), for example, in a large-scale self-report survey involving 1,899 Dutch-speaking families, found a strong correlation between parental language use and children's HL use. When both parents spoke the home language between themselves and to their children, the chances for children to use the HL were high.

2) Different provisions of literacy resources

Across all three groups, there was a clear tendency that parents provided more literacy resources and engaged more in literacy activities in English language than in their HLs. Although there were variations from family to family in these communities, this tendency was generally noticeable from structured TV-

viewing to reading practices and children's books. Compared with the Urdu-speaking Pakistani group, the Chinese and Italians were much more conscious of their HL in their language planning efforts, as evidenced by the number of HL books and the frequency of shared book reading activities. Many more Italian than Chinese parents read regularly to their children in their HL. In the Pakistani families, no time was dedicated to HL TV-viewing and educational games, and four out of ten families had zero HL books, and another four had less than ten HL books. The results seem to be consistent with their language practice pattern as children use less HL in this group. While it is impossible to draw a direct line between the number of HL books and language use patterns, the lack of HL literacy resources and activities are a strong indicator of the changes in language behaviour between different generations in the family.

When it comes to the English language, all three groups showed similar efforts in shared book reading and in children's independent reading (given the number of children who could read). The Urdu-speaking Pakistani families tended also to allow children more hours for TV-viewing and game-playing. Comparing children's English books, again, the Chinese and Italian children owned many more books than the Urdu-speaking children who, on the other hand, went to the library more frequently.

The uneven resources and linguistic environments reflect partially the parental attitudes toward English and HL and partially the educational demands from the public educational system. Given the status English enjoys, both in the UK and in the rest of the world, it is understandable that parents tend to place more value on English than on HLs. Our study indicates that the power subtly inscribed in a particular language like English may invisibly shape parental decisions about the continuity of cultural and linguistic heritage. Such value-laden conscious and unconscious ideological beliefs have also been reported in other studies of FLP in the UK (Kirsch 2012), in the US (Kang 2015), and in Singapore (Curd-Christiansen 2012; 2014). Kirsch's study of seven Luxembourgish families in the UK showed that despite the mothers' strong identification with Luxembourgish and their determination to maintain their children's HL, they often struggled to do so in a society where public discourse emphasises a monolingual English-only ideology. Unquestionably, these ideological beliefs are related to the language policy of the public education system. Ro and Cheatham (2009), for example, studied a Korean family in the US where parents decided to use more English at home with their first child when he entered an English-only preschool. Curdt-Christiansen's (2014) study of Singaporean bilingual families also showed that FLPs were heavily influenced by the English-knowing bilingual policy where English competency was a gatekeeper for entrance both to the job market and to higher education.

3) Disparity of expectations

Although our measurement of expectations was set at the initial level of literacy acquisition, the self-reported expectations and aspirations again showed that different values and powers are manifested in English and HLs. While the majority of Chinese and Italian parents and all Urdu-speaking Pakistani parents expected their children to be able to recognize the letters of the English alphabet when entering grade 1, the Chinese and Pakistani parents not only expected their children to know the alphabet, they also expected them to be able to write the letters. The Italian parents, on the other hand, emphasised communication skills rather than writing ability. In general, the parents held lower expectations for HL and higher expectations for English as evidenced through our interview data. The higher aspirations for English were particularly pronounced among the Pakistani and Chinese parents as expressed in the following excerpts:

I do view English as having more importance over Urdu because I don't want my child to fall behind at school or anything to hinder their learning. It's not the belief that Urdu is less important. Urdu has a different importance; my child will learn Urdu so they can speak to their grandparents and other family members. Speaking Urdu is more important, reading and writing in Urdu is not so important. My child will not need to read and write Urdu for anything. It's pointless. (Interview with Mrs S., mother)

Mrs S.'s testimonial gave an illustrative indication of her attitudes towards English and Urdu. For her, English was the school language and the language leading to success in education. Although she acknowledged that 'Urdu is not less important', she was more concerned about that it might 'hinder their learning' in English. Perhaps, her attitudes were also influenced by the public discourse of Islamophobia as speaking Urdu could be related to Muslim identity (Crozier and Davies 2008; Yougov 2013).

Perceptibly, there was a clear demarcation in the domain of language use between English and Urdu. Urdu was the language used with 'grandparents and other family members', but not a language that deserved developed literacy skills. The perceived value of Urdu, which in her view 'has a different importance', illustrates a hierarchical order of languages in her family, perhaps because of the family's long term settlement in the UK and the lack of functional value of Urdu in the broader Pakistani community in the UK.

While the ideological perceptions of Chinese may not be visibly less valuable for the Chinese parents, they expressed lower expectations for their children to develop Chinese literacy - which resulted from concerns over limited linguistic exposure, as expressed by Mr Z. (father) in our interview in English, translated from Mandarin (R = researcher).

R: From the questionnaire, you indicate that book reading at home is largely in English, and not that much time is given to Chinese. What has been taken into consideration when you decided to do so?

Z: First of all, she [daughter] has to complete her school work. Currently, she is in a private primary school, so she has homework to do every day. When that is completed, it's already eight, time for bed. To read in Chinese, we really don't have time for it. Because we both work and have to make sure that one of us gets home before seven, so we take turns to bathe her, supervise homework. This is the main reason. Ideally, we should read to her in English and do the same in Chinese.

In this conversation, Mr Z. shared his frustration about time constraints for developing his daughter's Chinese. This is a common concern observed and reported by many parents. While keeping up with school work was prioritised because of the educational demands, such prioritised decisions may overtly and covertly 'coerce' parents to promote English. Subsequently, the negotiation between educational reality and linguistic continuity has resulted in their compromise for their children's Chinese language development and lower expectations for developing Chinese literacy skills.

6 Conclusion

This comparative study of three minority-language groups in the UK illustrates the complexity of developing competence in English while maintaining HL in home domains. Revealing the dilemmas parents encountered every day in their lives when raising bilingual children, the study shows the challenges parents have as they struggle to keep up with social pressures and the demands of the educational system while trying to remain loyal to their home culture and HL. In advancing our understanding of the processes of intergenerational transmission, our study contributes to the field of FLP in three aspects by: (1) expanding the literature on FLP with a focus on language management; (2) providing cross-community explorations of conscious language planning activities to capture the linguistic environments and socio-cultural conditions for multiple language development; and (3) highlighting the role of parental aspirations and expectations in children's language development.

Language management is an important component of FLP as interventions from language managers (parents/caregivers) can provide or alter the linguistic environments for additive bilingual development. Previous studies have examined parental discourse strategies as a management tool (Curdtt-Christiansen

2013; Lanza 2007; Pillar 2001), while our study emphasises children's literacy experiences in both HL and English as conscious choices made by parents. The contribution is particularly timely because it synergises home literacy studies with the theory of language management to explore how children develop their HL through home literacy studies. While home literacy studies typically investigate home literacy practices, literacy environment, and their effects on early literacy acquisition related to formal school education in dominant languages, our study goes beyond the discourse strategy level to look at the role of literacy experiences in intergenerational transmission.

Our study also contributes to FLP by comparing different communities in the UK. Although all the families resided in the UK, their provision of linguistic environments and literacy resources varied. Owing to different status and social function of the HLs involved, parents showed different ideological convictions towards HLs and made different investments in developing English and HL. While all three groups considered English an important language for school education, the Chinese and Urdu-speaking Pakistani parents put more emphasis on developing English literacy skills. With respect to the HL, the Urdu-speaking Pakistani parents regarded their HL less important because of its low functional significance and low instrumental value in the UK society, and consequently they provided fewer literacy resources and literacy practices for their children. In the case of the Italian and Chinese families, although HL books were abundant in both groups, the Chinese parents engaged less frequently than the Italian parents in shared reading with their children. Such practices may reduce the richness of the linguistic environments for HL development.

Finally, our study has contributed to FLP by exploring parents' expectations of their children's biliteracy ability and attainments. While expectations and aspirations are related broadly to macro language policy and societal attitudes about migration and diversity, they are more connected to children's immediate needs in their formal education development. As evidenced from our study, parents have competing goals for children's HL and English development, reflecting their beliefs about children's additive bilingual development. De Houwer (1999) referred to such beliefs as "impact beliefs" where parents see themselves as responsible for and capable of raising bilingual children. These "impact beliefs" are subsequently translated into actual management efforts to develop the children's multiple languages.

Our study provides strong evidence for conscious parental decision and planning activities for their children's bilingual development. While they have provided various types of linguistic environments that enable them to enrich their children's linguistic repertoire, they have also encountered difficulties that prevent intergenerational language transmission. Our study shows that in order

to ensure more positive outcomes of bilingual development, the public educational system and schools need to provide adequate structures and facilities for HL development as well as ideological support for families battling against language shift and loss.

Acknowledgement: This work was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council [grant number ES/NO19105/1]; and the Institute of Education, University of Reading.

Funding: Funder Name: Economic and Social Research Council, Funder Id: 10.13039/501100000269, Grant Number: ES/NO19105/1.

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