Transmission of Japanese as a heritage language in the bilingual polity of Catalonia: A case study

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Abstract

This study explores the transmission of Japanese in Japanese-Catalan/Spanish speaking families in Catalonia from the perspective of *Family Language Policy*. Based on the data obtained through in-depth interviews with nine Japanese-speaking parents whose spouses are Catalan native speakers, we describe these families' language policies in terms of how they shed light on how parents cope with transmitting Japanese in such contexts. One of the most striking findings of this study is that socially weaker languages ―namely Japanese and Catalan― have an important presence in most of the participants' families despite the use of Spanish between the parents in their home. The result of our analysis also suggests that parental beliefs and attitudes have a significant influence on their language practice and the maintenance of the heritage language (HL) at home.

Keywords: language transmission; family language policy; Catalan; Japanese; heritage language

Introduction

Due to the unprecedented scale of transnational mobility as part of globalization, multilingual transnational families are growing in number. Parents of such families, (henceforth *interlingual parents*), often hope that their children will speak in the

language of both parents (Takeuchi, 2006; Tuominen, 1999; Yamamoto, 2001). However, heritage languages (henceforth HL)[1] are likely to be difficult to transmit and maintain without social support and especially parental effort (Draper and Hicks, 2000; Hinton, 1999; Minami, 2011). Otherwise, it is likely that the language(s) of the society will become the dominant one(s) in children's linguistic repertoires (Nakajima [1998]2008; Yamamoto, 2001), whilst their HL may disappear. Therefore, to retain the HL, deliberate efforts are needed. The family is often considered to be the essential domain where HL is transmitted successfully (Lee and Shin, 2008, Pauwel 2005; Schwartz, 2010, amongst others), since the family is where language and culture are practised and transmitted to the next generation (Kataoka and Shibata, 2011).

The present study investigates Catalan/Spanish/Japanese-speaking families[2] to qualitatively illustrate the transmission of their HL from the perspective of *Family Language Policy* (henceforth FLP, King et al., 2008) to gain a deeper understanding of language endangerment and efforts to maintain a heritage language.

Language transmission and Family Language Policy

Many factors influence the decision whether to transmit the HL or not to children (see Schüpbach, 2009). Numerous researchers agree that parental attitudes and beliefs are key factors (De Houwer, 1999; Park and Sarkar, 2007; Schüpbach, 2009; Takeuchi, 2006; Tuominen, 1999; Yamamoto, 2008), because parents' perceptions of the value of a given language provide a crucial motivation for its use among family members (Yamamoto 2008:134).

Once interlingual parents decide on language transmission, they create their own language policy either consciously or unconsciously at the micro-level (De Klerk, 2001), planning for which language to practice and what measures to employ to control

family members' language behaviour. This is known as FLP. Family is a 'community of practice' with 'its own norms for language use' and 'its own ways of speaking, acting and believing' (Lanza, 2007:47), which are enacted through FLP.

FLP has three components: practice (choice and use of language), management (efforts made to control family members' language use) and ideology (how family members think about language, see King et al., 2008; Schwartz, 2010, Spolsky, 2004). The most widely known and practised FLP to optimise bilingual language proficiency outcomes is the *One-Parent One-Language* (henceforth *OPOL*, Döpke 1992) approach, whereby each parent consistently speaks his or her first language (henceforth L1) to their child. This approach allows for consistent quantity and high-quality input in two languages (King and Logan-Terry, 2008:6). Despite some critiques, such as exclusion of one parent from the conversation, or development of children's passive bilingual competence (Arnberg, 1987; Döpke, 1992; Takeuchi 2006; Yamamoto, 1995), it has often been recommended as 'the best way' for a child to become fluently bilingual (Barron-Hauwaert, 2011) and is perceived as a 'natural way' for the parents (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Palviainen and Boyd, 2013).

The interactional strategies between parents and children are influenced by factors such as parents' personal experiences (Curdt-Cristiansen, 2009), opinions or advice from other bi-/multilingual families or teachers (King and Fogel, 2006), public discourses (Okita, 2002), bi-/multilingual child-rearing literature (Guardado, 2017; King and Fogel, 2006; Okita, 2002) and so forth. Language ideology—beliefs, language use, strategy and bi-/multilingualism—is a crucial factor that determines language practice and management (Curdt-Cristiansen, 2009; De Houwer, 1999; King et al, 2008; Piller, 2001; Schwartz, 2010) and consequently maintains a minority language at home (Fogle and King, 2013). Furthermore, as parental language ideologies are inextricably

connected to macro-level ideologies (Seloni and Sarfati 2013), in a community where more than one ideology is at work, the conflict between competing ideologies is observed as the genesis of language policies, and such ideological conflicts can become crucial for the family (King et al., 2008:911). The study of FLP can, therefore, allow examination of parental language ideologies that reflect broader societal attitudes about both language(s) and parenting (ibid).

Interlingual families in Catalonia

Catalonia is a bilingual society where both Catalan and Spanish are official languages. It is an autonomous community that has received more immigrants than any other region in Spain (Rodriguez-García et al., 2015). During the 1960s, it housed a great number of Spanish-speaking immigrants from elsewhere in Spain, which resulted in bilingual couples. Previous studies indicate that these couples were likely to use Spanish to communicate, since Spanish tends to dominate when Spanish-speakers and Catalan-speakers are conversing (see Vila i Moreno and Galindo Solé, 2013).

Recently Catalonia has had a massive wave of newcomers from outside of Spain. These immigrants from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds have contributed to the predominance of Spanish[3] in Catalonia (Boix-Fuster and Vila i Moreno, 2006) as well as mixed unions between immigrants and natives (Rodríguez-García et al., 2018)—13,5% of all marriage registered in Catalonia.[4] In spite of the increase in mixed marriages, few studies have examined such transnational multilingual families (Rodríguez-García et al., 2018). These studies have reported that Spanish is likely to be used for parental communication in terms of its higher status or practicality (Bernat i Baltrons, 2017; Fukuda, 2017; Moroni, 2015; Torrens, 2012), since when there is disproportionate linguistic competence, a couple is likely to adopt the language that they

view as having valuable cultural capital (Bastardas, 2016). Thus, Catalan is rarely chosen as a language of parental communication in these families. Despite the prevalence of Spanish within the home, the abovementioned studies found that the HL has a certain presence by maintaining the pattern of everyday use with each family member.

The Japanese abroad and language transmission

Currently, 1,352,970 Japanese nationals are living overseas.[5] Approximately 36% are living permanently in their respective host society and this number is growing each year. Although the exact number is unknown, these permanent residents include an important fraction who left Japan for intermarriage. Due to such a phenomenon, the teaching of Japanese as a HL is currently emerging as an important issue for discussion.[6] Research on this issue is growing, although not sufficiently so far mainly because (1) the study of Japanese as a HL, particularly in multilingual families, is a relatively new field of research, since the increase of Japanese heritage children from intermarried families is a recent phenomenon (Suzuki, 2004); and (2) national policies concerning the language of children in these families have been rarely enacted since it is considered each family's problem (Hanai, 2016).

Some studies specialized in language transmission in intermarried families (Hanai, 2016; Muranaka, 2008; Okita, 2002; Takeuchi, 2006; Yamamoto, 2001; 2005; 2008), and from the viewpoint of FLP (Danjo, 2015; Fukuda, 2018; Oriyama, 2016). These studies almost unanimously ask how to promote HL transmission under the 'threat' of the predominant language of each society, where the input of Japanese (Nakajima, [1998]2008; Yamamoto, 2001; 2005 among others), parental attitudes or children's attitudes (Hanai, 2012; Oriyama, 2016; Takeuchi, 2006 among others) are often

influencing factors. Furthermore, the OPOL approach was commonly adopted amongst the families analysed in these studies (Danjo, 2015; Kasuya, 1998; Oriyama, 2016; Takeuchi, 2006) which stress the importance of parental consistency when using Japanese to communicate with children.

These studies investigated Japanese being weakened by one predominant language (mostly English) in each society. Then, in a context like Catalonia where two languages of different value and status ―one being an international language (Spanish) and the other a less international language without a state (Catalan)―are in conflict within its own territory, how would transmission of Japanese as a HL occur? To answer this question, the present study addresses the following issues:

(1) How do Japanese parents organize their language use at home using what strategy?

(2) What were the outcomes? Were there any challenges?

(3) What do Japanese parents think about the languages in question and bi-/multilingualism?

Methods

Data collection

A qualitative method was used to explore the language dynamics of these families: specifically, how do parents enact their FLP and transmit the HL in Catalonia, and how do they think about language transmission and the multilingualism of their children. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with nine Japanese parents of Japanese-Catalan/Spanish speaking families living in Barcelona,

since this method facilitates in-depth knowledge of respondents' thoughts and provides the flexibility to present new questions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

All these parents had a spouse who was a native speaker[7] of Catalan and enrolled their child(ren) at the Supplementary School of Japanese Language in Barcelona (hereafter the supplementary school, N = 6) and the full-time Japanese School of Barcelona (hereafter the Japanese school, N = 3). We selected these participants, since enrolling children at these schools requires the whole family's understanding and collaboration (Kamoto, 2006), which suggests a high parental interest in language transmission. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that our informants reported that they had no plans to return to Japan in the short term, although it might be changed depending on future circumstances.

Table 1. Profile of the participants[8]

Name (age)	Sex	Years of residence in Catalonia	Number of children (age)	Children's school type	Parents' evaluation of child(ren)'s Japanese level	Spouse's knowledge of the Japanese language
Mother 1 (42)	F	18	3 (12, 6, 3)	Local school +SS	Rather low	None
Mother 2 (38)	F	12	2 (10, 3)	Local school +SS	Quite high	None
Father 1 (41)	M	15	1 (5)	Local school +SS	Very low	Some words
Mother 3 (36)	M	9	3 (?)	Local school +SS	Very low	None

Mother 4 (35)	F	12	2 (9, 3)	Local school + SS	High	Three months at language school
Father 2 (44)	M	4	2 (11, 9)	Local school + SS	Middle	Five years in Japan, language school
Mother 5 (39)	F	14	2 (15, 14)	JS	High	None
Mother 6 (43)	F	16	1 (10)	JS	High	None
Mother 7 (?)	F	?	1 (10)	JS	High	Some words

M: Male F: Female SS: Supplementary school of Japanese Language JS: Japanese school

The participants were asked to respond to questions on the following topics: family history (how they came to Catalonia); language biography (past and current use; progress of children's language development); and attitudes towards language (experiences living in Catalonia; why they decided to transmit Japanese to their children; why they chose a local and/or a Japanese school). Being semi-structured interviews, the participants were guided by open-ended questions, but they were allowed to freely discuss topics that emerged.

Interviews took place in the participants' homes, in the school or in the researcher's home. In most cases children were present during interviews, which allowed the researcher to observe any interaction with parents and siblings. All conversations were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed qualitatively. For this study, *play-script version* transcription (Johnstone, 2000:115–118) was adopted, since our focus is on the content of the conversation. The length of the interviews varied from 60 to 90 minutes.

Language practice at home and strategy (practice and management)

The border between language practice and management is blurred as parents may control or intervene in their children's discourse behaviour in everyday conversation (Curdt-Christiansen 2014:38). In this study, 'deliberate efforts' such as language use strategies or correcting language use are considered to be part of language practice.

Table 2. Reported language use in the participants' families

C: Catalan S: Spanish J: Japanese E: English (Bold type: predominant)

	Father ⇔ Mother	Father ⇔ Children	Mother ⇔ Children	Child ⇔ Child	All family members together
Mother 1	C⇔C	C⇔C	J⇔J/C	**C**/J⇔**C**/J	C
Mother 2	S⇔S	C⇔C	J⇔J	J⇔J	S,C,J
Father 1	S⇔S	J⇔J	C⇔C	(no sibling)	S,C,J
Mother 3	S⇔S	C⇔C	C⇔C **C**/J⇔C (only with the youngest child)	C⇔C	C
Mother 4	S⇔S	S⇔S	J⇔J	**S**/J⇔**S**/J	S,J
Father 2	**J**/S⇔**J**/S	J⇔J	C⇔C	C⇔C	S,C,J
Mother 5	E⇔E	C⇔C	J⇔J	**J**/C⇔**J**/C	C,E,J
Mother 6	S⇔S	C⇔C	J⇔J	(no sibling)	S,C,J

Mother 7	S⇔S	S⇔S	J⇔J	(no sibling)	S

Table 2 shows language use in the participants' families based on their self-report. The parents of most Japanese-Catalan-speaking families adopt Spanish as their language of communication, since foreigners are likely to learn this language (Fukuda, 2017).

In parent-children communication, all the parents interviewed said that they tried to speak exclusively in Japanese to their children. Actually, they demonstrated the patterns shown in Table 2 in the interactions observed during the interviews. However, there were discrepancies between the declared commitment to the HL and actual language usage, since actual language use is 'what people actually do' rather than 'what people think they should do' (Spolsky, 2004). This is observed particularly in cases where parents follow OPOL less strictly. Some parents reported that they sometimes inevitably mix local language(s) to refer to everyday objects, which are difficult to translate in Japanese, or school-related vocabulary so that children can easily understand. Mother 4 reported that despite her intention not to mix languages, her children cannot help using Spanish or Catalan words when they cannot find a suitable Japanese word. She says, 'I think it's not good' suggesting that her family's language policy is to have a rigid language border to enhance the use of the HL at home.

Some children reportedly respond to their parents partly or entirely in Spanish or Catalan, even though their parents address them in Japanese. This often happens when their parents cannot help responding to them in these languages:

Excerpt I: [Mother 1 and her sons are talking about soccer players]

Son 1: I el Ronaldinho en té 23.
Mother 1: Sí? 23 anys ? (Yes? Twenty-three years old?)
(…)
Mother 1: なんであのEto'oがあのうち買ったって言ったの？あの黄色いうち。

Nande ano Eto'o ga ano uchi kattatte itta no? Ano kiiroi uchi.

(Why did you say that Eto'o had bought that house? That yellow one.)

Son 1: No, que potser viuria allà. (No, (I said that) he might live there)

Son 2: I al final on viu? (And where will he live after all?)

Mother 1: 要するに見に来たわけね。うちを買おうと思って。*Yōsuruni mini kita wake ne. Uchi o kaōto omotte.*

(That is, he came to see the house, right? To buy it.)

Son 1: Segur que el primer dia va amb un *Testarossa*.

(On the first day, surely he will come in *Testarossa*.)

Mother 1: 何それ？名前？車の。*Nani sore? Namae? Kuruma no.*

(What is that? Name? Of a car?)

Son 1: Un dels cotxes més cars del món. (One of the most expensive cars in the world.)

Mother 1: あ、ほんと？ *A honto?* (Oh really?)

Mother 1 realized that she had responded to her son in Catalan and switched into Japanese immediately, although the children kept speaking in Catalan. She finds it natural that her children speak the language of where they live. Thus, she allows them to respond to her in Catalan even when she addresses them in Japanese. She considered this 'generous' attitude the main cause of her children's less active use of Japanese.

Regarding language practice between siblings, the non-Japanese parent's language seems to be used, whilst Japanese also has an important presence. In families with pre-school children, the predominant language is likely to be Japanese. In such cases, the elder children are prone to adapt their language use for their younger siblings, enhancing the use of Japanese.

When all family members are present, there are two options: adopting a common language or translating. In the former case, the majority language or language of higher status (Baker and Sienkewicz, 2000; Barron-Hauwaert, 2004, 2011; Lyon, 1996) is often chosen as the lingua franca. Except for three families, our participants reported that they did not establish a single common family language whilst they also

consistently maintained OPOL. Thus, Japanese parents or children are interpreters so that the Catalan/Spanish-speaking parent also understands.

Management

Except for Mother 3's family, all participants claimed to transmit the HL to their children through OPOL to different degrees: some parents had adopted it before their child(ren)'s birth and persist with this method (Mother 2, Mother 6, Father 1, Mother 4), whilst others adhered less to their FLP (Mother 5, Mother 7, Father 2) or began to doubt it (Mother 1). The former four parents reported that they intervened when the child(ren) did not respond in 'the right language' (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Lyon, 1996) when spoken to, using discourse strategies such as 'Expressed guess strategy' (Ochs, 1998) or 'Adult repetition of the content of the child's utterance in other language' (Lanza, 2007). It may work well or not as Father 1 explained: 'when my daughter asks me to give her something, I don't give it to her until she says it in Japanese. I give her some hints such as "something to eat?" However, when she doesn't know how to say this, she gets frustrated and just gives up.' According to him, his daughter avoids mixing languages, for risk of being scolded, which makes her speak less in Japanese. Besides that, our participants' families did not report any particular problem that was caused by the trilingual setting.

Mother 3's family was the only one to have a *laissez-faire* style of language planning (Lanza, 2007; Piller, 2001). She prioritized good communication in that all her family members understand each other in the language(s) in which they feel comfortable. Since Mother 3 is highly competent in Catalan, she often speaks it with her children, and the children know that she understands perfectly what they are saying in Catalan. Thus, the children found little need to communicate in Japanese with their

mother, which discouraged the use of Japanese. Consequently, Catalan became their dominant language, while Japanese was limited to the mother's partial use with the youngest child.

Our participants made further efforts to complement and/or improve their children's Japanese skills. In addition to enrolling them either at the Japanese school or the supplementary school to receive a formal education in Japanese, reading in Japanese, watching Japanese movies etc., listening to Japanese songs and trips to Japan were reported to advance the children's aptitude in Japanese. Direct interactions with family in Japan were also reported to be helpful.

Mother 2 and Mother 6, who adhere strictly to OPOL, did not enrol their children at local nursery. They took advantage of not working until their children were three years old and spent time with them, providing early input into their Japanese: '(From her birth) I always addressed my daughter in Japanese, sang lullabies in Japanese, showed DVDs in Japanese. "When the cat's away, the mice will play" [laugh] (…) I aimed to have her by my side to immerse her in Japanese' (Mother 6). Furthermore, Mother 2 did not learn Catalan to enhance the children's use of Japanese, since she was afraid that if her children discovered that she understood Catalan, they would be less motivated to learn Japanese and would reject the language. Their strategy served to firmly establish this pattern.

Whereas, parents who enrolled their children at a Japanese school reported that they did not make special efforts regarding their children's Japanese development, but they were quite ambitious regarding their level.

Children's HL development

Multilinguals are rarely equally competent in the skills of any one language, whilst one language usually becomes dominant (Braun and Cline, 2014). The results of our study have identified some factors that can influence children's HL development: school type, parental confidence and parent's gender.

As noted by many studies, the school language, particularly that used by their peers, is likely to become the children's dominant language (cf. Barron-Hauwaert 2004; Tuominen 1999; Yamamoto 1995, 2001) and also the language of communication between siblings (Okita, 2002; Tuominen, 1999; Yamamoto, 2001), which we also observed.

Children who attend a Japanese school are highly competent in Japanese, thus their parents are quite ambitious, particularly regarding literacy. The Japanese writing system is very complex (Gottlieb, 2005). Thus, even though they have a good knowledge of *kanji*[9] through school, it is difficult to maintain and improve it, since its use is limited to school-related activities. Furthermore, parents are anxious about their children's level hoping that they 'can write a composition with *Kishōtenketsu*[10]' (Mother 6). Mother 6 set a further task for her daughter to understand and use appropriate Japanese as it is a language with a wide variety of styles, which are indispensable in society. This suggests that they see their children's development in Japanese at the same level as their counterparts in Japan.

However, these children are less competent in local language(s) and their level causes anxiety for these families. Mother 7 and her husband reported that their son's Spanish had declined while he was studying at the Japanese school. Mother 7's husband's knowledge of Japanese has also enhanced the use of their HL at home. Although these children's parents affirmed that the Japanese school is a linguistic environment that fosters proficiency in Japanese, being less competent in local

languages is the price to pay for having chosen this option. Nonetheless, the children whose parents are highly confident in their FLP (Mother 5, Mother 6) seem to have a good level of knowledge in local languages, with Japanese being predominant. Their positive attitude and confidence in their FLP may have been the key to their children's successful language acquisition.

Those children who attended a local school also spoke Japanese with their parent(s), although they were more competent in the local language(s). The parents of these children wish them to achieve a minimum level of Japanese to allow them to communicate with relatives in Japan. Yet, when asked about their anxiety regarding their children's HL development, they said that their children were not at an age appropriate level, suggesting that they unconsciously compare their children's development in Japanese with their peers in Japan. These children commonly had difficulties acquiring Japanese, although the levels varied. The parents of those achieving a good level appeared highly confident in their FLP with firm ideas about their child's language education based on their rich knowledge about bilingualism acquired through specialized literature or other bilingual families' advice. Mother 2's son had such a hard time in acquiring Japanese that a speech therapist recommended they temporarily stop teaching Japanese, although Mother 2 did not give up, since she was highly confident in her language policy.

As Mother 4 affirmed, 'Whether one can or cannot stand all the hardships may be the key to successful transmission. I'm so proud of my children, because they don't care even when their peers call them *chino,* but they continue speaking Japanese.' These Japanese heritage children were often called *chino* (= 'Chinese' in Spanish) by their peers, which makes them feel 'different' and thus reluctant to speak Japanese in their presence. The choice of a Japanese school by some parents is also related to this so that

they did not feel as ‘different’. Nonetheless, according to some parents, owing to the great number of Japanese cartoons in Spain, being competent in Japanese is admired, which can motivate children to learn their HL.

However, the parents of those children who had a rather low competence in Japanese (Mother 1, Father 1, Father 2) seemed less confident in their FLP: Mother 1’s lack of confidence led to a lack of consistency in application, which negatively influenced the children’s development in Japanese.

Finally, two male parents’ cases suggest that the parent’s gender may have some influence on child(ren)’s HL development. Although nowadays more mothers participate in the workforce, traditionally, mothers are the main caregivers and these two cases suggest that language transmission is their domain (Schüpbach, 2009). Father 2’s family apparently has favourable conditions for HL transmission since the family lived in Japan for five years; the Catalan-speaking mother is highly competent in Japanese; and the couple mainly use Japanese in their communication. Nonetheless, father-daughter communication is less intense than that of mother-daughter (see Youniss and Ketterlinus, 1987), which appears to hinder the use of Japanese: ‘Unless I ask them to speak in Japanese, they continue speaking in Catalan ignoring me’ (Father 2). This behaviour was also observed in Father 1’s family:

Excerpt II: [Father 1 and his daughter are looking at the pictures of young girls in some magazines for kids]

Father 1:これ？これ若々しくてかっこいいじゃん。この女の子の名前、なんつうの？知らない？*Kore? Kore wakawakashikute kakkoii jan. Kono onnanoko no namae, nan tsū no? Shiranai?* (This one? This one is young and cool. What is her name? Don’t you know?)

Kana：知らない。*Shiranai*. (I don’t know.)

Father 1:
かなもこういうきれいな女の子になりたい？なりたくない？どうでもいい？*Kana mo kōiu kireina onnanoko ni naritai? Naritakunai? Dō demo ii?* (Do you want to be such a pretty girl like her, too? Don’t you? Or whatever?)

Kana: [Remains silent]
Father 1:じゃあ、なに？お父さんに聞いて。お父さんどれ好き？って。*Jā nani? Otōsan ni kii te. Otōsan dore sukitte*. (Then, what? Ask your dad. Ask me which one do I like the best)
Kana:これ？*Kore?* (This one?)
(…)
Father 1:一番好きなの？一番好きなのはね、うーん、どれがいいかな。これ。どうしてだか知ってる？*Ichiban sukina no? Ichiban sukina no wa ne, ūn, dore ga ii ka na. Kore. Dōshite da ka shitte ru?* (The one I like the best? Hmm, which one do I choose… This one. Do you know why?)
Kana:ん？*N?* (Huh?)
Father 1:どうしてだか知ってる？わかんない？(Do you know why? Don't you know?)
Kana:え？*E?* (What?)
Father 1:どうしてだか知ってる？お父さん、どうしてこれ好きか。ごはん食べてるから。こういうアイスクリームだとかいろいろ食べてるの好き。かなはどれが好き？*Dōshite da ka shitte ru? Otōsan, dōshite kore suki ka. Gohan tabete ru kara. Kō iu aisukurīmu da toka iroiro tabe teru no suki. Kana wa dore ga suki?* (Do you know why? Why I like this one? Because she eats. I like this one who eats a variety of things like ice cream. And you, which is your favourite?)
Kana:これとこれ。*Kore to kore*. (This and this)

Compared with Father 1, the girl could barely manage a single word. This less intense communication with his daughter made him feel less confident in his strategy, because according to him, his presence in a conversation does not interest her. Throughout the interview with him, maintaining a conversation in Japanese and the difficulty of transmitting HL as a father were the main issues.

Reasons for transmission of HL based on strategy

The main reasons for transmission of HL are often related to the children's identity (Jeon, 2008; Park and Sarkar, 2007; Takeuchi, 2006 amongst others). Our participants indicated two reasons: emotional and instrumental. Regarding emotional reasons, it was common 'to conserve the children's Japanese identity'. They believe that a language defines one's identity. They spoke Japanese naturally to their child(ren) because 'our children are half Japanese' (Mother 1, Father 2) and 'Japanese is the

father's/mother's language' (Father 1, Mother 5, Mother 6, Mother 4). Other emotional reasons concur with what Okita (2002) noted about mothers' 'communicative satisfaction' and 'old hearth ties'. Mother 2 explained, 'I want to express in my mother tongue what I really want to transmit to my children. I just cannot imagine that I would speak to my children in any language other than Japanese'. Mother 6 used Japanese with her daughter from birth so she would not lose ties with her family in Japan. Mother 3's decision to speak Japanese was to respond her parents' pressure who 'blamed' her because her children did not understand Japanese. Thus, enrolling her children at the supplementary school was an attempt to gain her parents' recognition for the efforts she had made. The second motivation is related to the children's future investment. Regardless of whether their children would use Japanese in the future, they believed they were providing their children with a valuable resource that could open up more opportunities (Mother 4 or Mother 6, Mother 5).

Strategies adopted by parents reflect their beliefs about language. The popularity of OPOL as 'the best method' despite some critiques meant most participants used this method unconditionally. Their choice is supported by the firm belief that each parent should speak in his or her L1. This belief is mainly formed through advice from other bilingual families or teachers, which can be verified through their saying, 'I was told that…' or 'I was advised that…'. Nonetheless, when they were asked about their language practice at home, they responded that this pattern had emerged 'naturally' without explicit discussion, which suggests that they take it for granted that one person should speak only his or her L1.

Furthermore, transmitting the HL is associated with 'good parenting': providing opportunities to be bilingual is seen as being 'good parents' (King and Fogle, 2006). Mother 6's case suggests that she is a 'good daughter' who 'gifts' her parents with

opportunities to communicate with their grandchild in Japanese. In the case of Mother 3, transmitting Japanese is also associated with her wish to be seen as a good parent and daughter by responding to her parents' pressure.

The choice of school type can also reflect parental beliefs, since choice regarding bilingual education is not arbitrary. In our study, some parents chose a Japanese school because they believe that children should receive education in both parents' languages, and a Japanese school provides them with Japanese national education. Furthermore, being a national school abroad, the school educates Japanese nationals based on Japanese sociocultural values, which may meet parents' expectations of providing something beyond a mere L1 maintenance and their wish to 'raise our son as Japanese' (Mother 7).

Whereas, others opted for local schools because of the belief that their children should receive an education in the local language(s) of the place they live in. These parents also wish to pass on Japanese to their children, although as something extra to their language repertoire as affirmed by Father 1: 'I want my daughter to become most proficient in Japanese, but after mastering Catalan, because we live in Catalonia, and her mother is Catalan'. They believe that the supplementary school is the most efficient method to satisfy such a desire of developing children's competence in Japanese whilst maintaining competence in local languages.

Attitudes towards bi-/multilingualism

All of our participants expressed positive attitudes towards bi-/multilingualism, believing it to be beneficial for their children's future. This positive attitude may be key to the successful transmission of HL as Mother 4 affirmed: 'Parents should show a positive attitude towards multilingual competence. Children would not do what their parents despise'.

Encounters through their spouses with bilingualism in Catalonia seem to be significant in forming their attitude towards bi-/multilingualism. They came to Catalonia when the Catalan government commenced a campaign to vigorously promote the social use of Catalan. Thus, they were at least well aware of the 'authentic' value of this language and perceived it as being weakened by Spanish. Relations with their spouse changed their perception about Catalan—from a less international language to an essential aspect of Catalonian life.

Whereas, Spanish was rarely mentioned in the interviews. This suggests that they did not consider Spanish as the primary language, but prioritized the socially weaker languages (Japanese and Catalan), assuming that the dominant language will be transmitted by the wider social environment, because 'children will learn it effortlessly' (Mother 2). In this way, Spain's ideological conflict is reflected to some extent in our participants' FLP. Language ideologies in Catalonia are often discussed in terms of different values of language —instrumental functions or identifying functions—which are also reflected in their FLP. Mother 7, the only participant who demonstrated a negative attitude towards Catalan, provided us with a glimpse into ideological polarization amongst parents regarding this dichotomous view. Mother 7 appreciated the practicality of Spanish and considered Catalonia as just one region of Spain, because her spouse believed so. Therefore, even though his L1 is Catalan, this language had no presence within the family.

Concluding remarks

This study explored how Japanese/Catalan-speaking families cope with the transmission of their HL to their children in the bilingual context of Catalonia from a viewpoint of FLP. Our findings can be summed up as follows.

First, despite the complex sociolinguistic context of Catalonia with two dominant host society languages that are very present (albeit to varying degrees), Japanese is quite well transmitted amongst our participants' families in the sense that it is used in communication between Japanese-speaking parents and their children to different degrees. Catalonia's official bilingualism and the societal evaluation of HL (Yamamoto, 2001) seem to favour transmitting Japanese to the participants' children.

Contrary to previous studies (Yamamoto, 2001; De Houwer, 2007), our study did not confirm that parental use of society's dominant language, Spanish, seriously hampered the children's use of 'socially weaker languages'. While levels of proficiency vary, almost all children of our participants' families use Japanese. In other words, these 'socially weaker languages' have an important presence in almost all the participants' families, which is the most striking finding of this study.

Second, regarding management, OPOL is the most commonly adopted FLP to transmit their HL. Most of the participants had not established a single common language, which might also enhance the use of Catalan and Japanese and avoid the dominance of Spanish within the home. Catalan can also be seen as a 'majority language', which weakens the use of Japanese, although this language is also seen as a socially weaker language by our participants in power relations with Spanish at the top. Braun and Cline (2014) note that there is an inherent instability and weakness in OPOL when three or more languages are involved, since one of the languages may become under-used or dropped. In our study, Spanish is the language that is discarded from parent-child(ren) communication in almost all Japanese-Catalan-speaking families under a commonly shared belief that 'socially weaker languages' need to be enhanced in the family sphere, while the socially dominant language can be learned effortlessly outside the home. The children are competent in three languages to varying degrees

regardless of their use, which suggests that keeping the country's national language at bay within the home domain (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004) helps the transmission of socially weaker languages through OPOL in a bilingual society such as Catalonia. The family with the *laissez-faire* style of language planning clearly suggests that unless HL parents make conscious use of this language, local languages will overwhelm the HL.

Third, our study showed that parental beliefs have a significant role in their FLP.

The belief that an L1 speaker can be the best speaker underlies their choice of OPOL. Furthermore, mixing is seen as bad behaviour, which suggests that one should have only one language, that is, OPOL can be an extension of the one nation one language ideology (Soler & Zabrodskaja, 2017). Macro-level ideologies also seem to influence our participants' view of local languages, but through their spouses, which is reflected in the great importance placed on 'weakened Catalan'.

Their belief is also reflected in their school choice: all our participants believe that formal education of Japanese ensures their children's development and active use. Nonetheless, they diverge at how they see HL transmission: whether Japanese language and sociocultural values form the essential part of children's identity or HL only forms a part of their language repertoire.

In terms of language development in children, the degree of parental confidence in the chosen strategy led to different outcomes despite adopting the same strategy. Their confidence has consistency with their FLP, leading to successful outcomes. Piller (2002) has shown that how the quest for 'perfectly balanced' bilingual children can result in both parental disappointment and children's sense of failure. Regarding our participants, explicit parental disappointment has not been exposed. However, when they describe their children's level of Japanese as lower than 'the age appropriate level',

it suggests that they unconsciously compare their children's HL development with that of their peers in Japan.

Though the number of cases was small, the study provides different cases of Japanese-Catalan/Spanish families trying to balance two 'weaker languages' at home. This variety implies a complex sociolinguistic situation in Catalonia. The findings of our study provide some preliminary evidence on substantial effort and consistency, not only in strategy but also with respect to our attitude towards maintaining two 'socially weaker languages' at home.

Acknowledgements

This study was supported by CUSC (Centre de Recerca en Sociolingüística i Comunicació) of Universitat de Barcelona under the grant *EVOPLUR* ('Evolució de les societats plurilingües: representacions, comportaments i capitals lingüístics'), Ministry of Science and Technology (BFF 2002-01323), and by the research group *INTERASIA* of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona under the grant 'El Impacto de Asia Oriental en el Contexto Español: Producción Cultural, Politica(s) y Sociedad', Ministry of Science and Innovation (FFI2011-29090). It is also supported by the research group GREGAL (Grup de Recerca GREGAL: Circulació Cultural Japó-Corea-Catalunya, 2017SGR1596) and by Department of Translation and Interpreting and East Asian Studies of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. I also would like to thank Enago (www.enago.jp) for the English language review.

I especially thank all the participants who collaborated in this study. Without them, this study would not have been possible.

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[1] By the term 'heritage language' we refer to 'languages other than the dominant language(s) in a given social context' (Kelleher, 2010:1) and one 'with which individuals have a personal connection' (Fishman, 2001). Although the use of this term is not common in a European context, we used it to emphasize that Japanese is a language to be passed down to children.

[2] Families in which all three languages are used and families in which Japanese and either Catalan or Spanish are used.

[3] According to a demographic census (EULP 2013), Spanish is considered the usual language by 50.7% of the population of Catalonia, while Catalan is considered as such by 36.3%.

[4] *Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya* (2017) https://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=aec&n=289&lang=en

[5] Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017) https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000368753.pdf

[6] Recently a group of Japanese language teachers and parents with Japanese heritage children collected signatures to present to some members of the National Diet demanding the inclusion of Japanese heritage children into the draft bill of the *Basic Act on Promotion of Japanese Language Education*.

7 The term 'native language' is not totally straightforward especially for those who reside in bi-/multilingual environments (Yamamoto, 2008). In fact, in Catalonia which language or whether both languages are the 'native language' is often ambiguous. In this study, we asked the participants' spouses what they consider as 'their language'.

[8] When the interviews were conducted. All the informants are codified to protect the participants' privacy.

[9] Chinese characters as used in Japan. For more details, see Gottlieb (2005).

[10] Structure and development of Japanese and Chinese narratives which consist of introduction, development, turn, and conclusion