

**Children's Agency in Family Language Policy: Turkish-speaking  
families in the UK**

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**This thesis is submitted for the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**2024**



## **DECLARATION of AUTHORSHIP**

I, Busra Akgun Ezin, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## ABSTRACT

Research in the field of multilingualism in recent decades has demonstrated that family language policies in multilingual households are not solely negotiated by parents, but are also shaped by children's beliefs and practices (Fogle & King, 2013; Gafaranga, 2010; Smith-Christmas, 2020). This is particularly evident in immigrant families, where tensions between ethnic values and the norms of the broader society can lead to intrafamilial negotiations and diversity in language use (Revis, 2016; Said & Zhu, 2019). This study explores how agency is negotiated and constructed by multilingual, British-born, Turkish-speaking children from multigenerational families living in London. Agency, in this context, is understood as "the socioculturally-mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112 ), as reflected in the children's narratives and language practices.

Using ethnography as the research method, this study draws on data from participant observation, semi-structured interviews with grandparents and parents, and language portraits with children to investigate how children navigate their linguistic repertoires in the negotiation and construction of family language policies during everyday interactions. Turkish-speaking families in the UK navigate complex linguistic repertoires, highlighting the nuanced negotiations of language use and identity within the context of broader social and cultural tensions. (Çavuşoğlu, 2021; Yilmaz, 2016). The study adopts a post-structuralist perspective on language, viewing languages as fluid components of dynamic repertoires rather than fixed entities (Busch, 2012).

In this study, I argue that children actively shape language practices within their families by negotiating their language choices. My findings illustrate the dynamic and relational nature of child agency, emphasising how it is both shaped by and shapes interactional practices over time and space (Smith-Christmas, 2021). Through multifaceted and creative strategies, children assert their agency in constructing and renegotiating family language policies. Furthermore, language portrait task reveals how children use body images as metaphorical spaces to express their lived experiences with languages, demonstrating how bodily and emotional associations influence their language choices (Busch, 2021). By focusing on these interactions, this study extends our understanding of multilingualism within family contexts and underscores the critical role children play in shaping linguistic diversity across generations.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This doctoral journey has been transformative, marked by countless moments of learning, growth, and inspiration. I am deeply grateful to those who have supported and guided me along the way, making this achievement possible.

First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to my main supervisor, Dr Vally Lytra, for her invaluable guidance, support, and profound insights throughout this journey. Her expertise, mentorship, and belief in my potential have been a cornerstone of my growth as a researcher and individual. I am profoundly thankful for the opportunity to learn under her supervision.

I also wish to thank Dr Cristina Ros i Solé whose thoughtful advice, sharp observations, and encouragement have enriched my work in immeasurable ways. Her support has been an essential part of my academic journey, and I feel privileged to have had her as a co-supervisor.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to the four participant families who generously shared their time, experiences, and stories as Turkish-speaking individuals in the UK. Their trust and openness made this research possible, and their voices are at the very heart of this study.

My partner, Dr Ercan Ezin, has been an unwavering source of support, love, and encouragement throughout this journey. Navigating our PhD journeys simultaneously has been an extraordinary experience. His understanding during countless late nights and challenging days, along with his steadfast belief in my abilities, has meant more than words can express. I am deeply grateful to have shared this journey with him.

I am deeply thankful to the Ministry of Education in Turkey for their generous sponsorship, which made this research endeavour a reality. Their investment in education empowers not only individuals but also the broader scholarly community in Turkey.

My mother and father's love and sacrifices have been the foundation upon which all my achievements rest. Their encouragement and pride in my work provided the strength to persevere through the most challenging times. I am forever indebted to them for their unwavering belief in me.

The emotional support and encouragement of my dear friends—Elif Sürücü, Duygu Çavdar Yağan, Tuğba Karayayla Savage, Ebru Göl, Faeggeh Sardari, Şura Kaya, Rasim Şimşek, and Mehmet Donat Sulu—have been invaluable, providing strength and keeping me buoyant through the toughest and most frustrating times.

Finally, to the children around the world who embrace and cherish their multilingualism and multiculturalism: you have been my inspiration throughout this journey. Your curiosity, resilience, and capacity for understanding remind us of the beauty in diversity. It is to you that I dedicate this thesis, with the hope that it may contribute, however modestly, to a world where differences are celebrated and seen as sources of strength.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CT: Cypriot Turkish

DCSF: Department for Children, Schools and Families

DfE: Department of Education

EU: European Union

FLP: Family Language Policy

GLA: Greater London Authority

LP: Language Portrait

NLTS: North London Turkish School

ONS: Office for National Statistics

OPOL: One-parent-one-language

ST: Standard Turkish

TLCEC of UK: The Turkish Language and Culture Educational Consortium

TRNC: The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

TS: Turkish-speaking



## TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Times New Roman italics is used for Cypriot Turkish and Times New Roman italic bolds is used for Kurdish Kurmanji. Calibri style in parentheses is for the translation from Turkish varieties and Kurdish to English.

- ((words))** Double parentheses enclose transcriber's comments.
- <laugh>** Angle brackets enclose descriptions of vocal noises (e.g. laughter, chuckle, inhale) or other noises on the recording that are relevant for the analysis (e.g. hands clapping).
- unfinished sentence/ utterance
- ! An exclamation mark indicates rising intonation (exclamatory).
- .. Dots indicate silence (more dots indicate a longer silence).



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# Chapter 1 Autobiographical Chapter

## 1.1 Introduction

*The universe is made of stories, not of atoms.*

-Muriel Rukeyser (1994, p. 135), *The Speed of Darkness*.

Our lives are shaped by the experiences we observe, feel, hear, and live through over time. These experiences deeply influence the decisions we make, particularly in our future endeavours. Like all individuals, scientists and scholars are shaped by key moments in their lives -instances that steer their academic and professional paths. Often, we find ourselves wondering about the stories behind these scholars: what experiences led them to focus on the particular problems that are central to their work? This curiosity drives us to seek out the personal narratives behind their academic journeys. As Heath (2012, p. 176) aptly puts it, we wonder “what the story might be that tells us how individual scientists and humanists came to pursue the particular problem at the centre of their work.”

In light of this, I begin by sharing my own personal story, tracing the motivations that inspired me to undertake this research. My journey began in childhood, where I first started to question issues related to identity and language. Although this process of questioning is ongoing, it has ultimately led me to explore the subject of language policies in minority families -the core focus of my research.

In the following sections, I first describe the observations I made in my own family and hometown regarding the representation and transmission of minority languages. Next, I reflect on my experiences working with Turkish-speaking parent-child interactions and home language practices while engaging with Turkish-speaking communities in London during my master’s studies. Finally, I outline the aims of my study and underscore the significance of this research.

## 1.2 My Personal Journey

I grew up in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, a city that, after Istanbul, ranks as the second largest with a population of approximately 5 million. Ankara also has one of the largest immigrant populations in Turkey, comprising about 10% of the country's total immigrant population, second only to Istanbul's 30% according to the census by Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI, 2017). In addition to Turkish, the official language, Turkey is home to speakers of a wide range of minority languages, reflecting the ethnic diversity of the country. However, data on citizens' mother tongues has not been collected or shared in censuses since 1985 (Aslan, 2013). According to the 1965 census, 90% of the population identified Turkish as their mother tongue, followed by Kurdish -including Zazaki (7.55%) -Arabic (1.16%), and Circassian (0.18%) (TSI, 1965). In Ankara, Kurdish was spoken by only 2% of the population, and other minority languages were used by less than 1%. A survey conducted by KONDA (2006) estimates that across Turkey, 84.5% of the population speaks Turkish as their mother tongue, while 11.9% speak Kurdish, 1.3% speak Arabic, and 1.0% speak Zazaki. A more recent survey conducted in 2020 by the Sosyopolitik Saha Araştırma Merkezi (Sociopolitical Field Research Centre) on 'The Use of Mother Tongue in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia' provides new insights<sup>1</sup>. In a study involving 5,600 participants from 16 provinces in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions, respondents were asked which language they primarily use at home. The results show that 65.8% speak Kurmanji (a dialect of Kurdish), 26.6% speak Turkish, 4% speak Arabic, and 3.6% speak Zazaki. This indicates that a total of 69.4% of participants reported speaking Kurdish (Kurmanji and Zazaki) at home.

I was raised in a multi-ethnic family with a Kurdish heritage on my father's side and a Turkmen heritage on my mother's side. This multi-ethnic background provided me with an early awareness of multiculturalism and its complexities. Like many other Anatolian families, my parents maintained strong ties with our extended family, particularly my grandparents. I was fortunate to spend considerable time with both sets of grandparents, as I was their "favourite" grandchild. These experiences allowed me to immerse myself in their distinct cultural practices -listening to stories from my grandmothers, visiting

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sahamerkezi.org/dogu-ve-guneydogu-anadolu-bolge-illerinde-anadil-kullanimi-arastirmasi/>

local markets with my grandfathers, and laughing at anecdotes about my parents' childhoods.

Although both my maternal and paternal grandparents came from working-class Muslim families and lived in the same neighbourhood, their family dynamics were quite different, especially regarding language practices at home. These differences illuminated the contrasting ways that language can serve as a bridge to cultural identity and family bonding.

First, my maternal family took great pride in their Turkmen identity and dialect, which is viewed as a form of "pure Turkish" (Hoey, 2013). Speaking the Turkmen dialect within the broader Turkish-speaking society was considered a privilege, and my maternal relatives actively encouraged me and my cousins to use it. I distinctly remember how we, as children, would compete to speak the Turkmen dialect in front of our grandparents, eager to gain their approval and pride. We even kept a notebook at my grandparents' home where we would write down new vocabulary they taught us. My maternal grandparents were deeply committed to passing down the Turkmen dialect to the next generation, making it an integral part of our family's intergenerational ties.

In contrast, exploring and expressing my Kurdish heritage on my father's side was far more challenging. This aspect of my identity was neither celebrated within the family nor embraced by wider society (Gelir, 2018; Icduygu et al., 1999; Van Bruinessen, 2000). A pivotal moment occurred when I was around twelve years old: during a large family gathering, I overheard my paternal grandfather speaking Kurdish with his siblings. It was the first time I realised that my family had been keeping this part of my heritage hidden from me. Up until that point, I had been raised to identify primarily with my Turkmen background. The revelation of my Kurdish roots sparked my curiosity, and I begged my grandfather to teach me some basic expressions in Kurdish. However, my parents quickly discouraged this effort when we returned home, warning me not to use Kurdish in public and not to reveal my Kurdish heritage to others. This reaction stemmed from the fear of being perceived as "not Turkish enough," a sentiment deeply ingrained in Turkish society's attitudes toward ethnic diversity.

My grandfather's story continued to intrigue me. He was the only one in his family who married outside his ethnic community. His wife and children never learned to speak

Kurdish, as he made no attempt to preserve the language within his nuclear family. As Curdt-Christiansen (2018) notes, decisions about language practices in families are often shaped by the values that members attribute to specific languages. While my grandfather rarely spoke Kurdish with his children, I noticed how his demeanour would brighten when he conversed in Kurdish with his siblings. It was clear that Kurdish remained an important part of his identity, even if he chose not to pass it down to his children.

His reluctance to transmit Kurdish to the next generation raises several questions. Was he fearful of the political stigma attached to the Kurdish language in Turkey? Or did he simply want to keep Kurdish as a private language shared only with those who valued it as deeply as he did? Perhaps his decision was influenced by the broader sociopolitical context, including the internal displacement of many Kurdish families during the creation of modern Turkey. Many families, like my grandfather's, relocated to central Turkey from eastern Anatolia, bringing with them an ethnic identity they felt compelled to hide due to social and political pressures. As Caldas (2012) points out, governments can exert significant influence on citizens' linguistic choices through legal and regulatory means. The 1982 Turkish Constitution, for example, explicitly prohibits the teaching of any language other than Turkish as a mother tongue in educational institutions. Such policies have placed immense pressure on Kurdish and other minority languages, shaping the linguistic landscape at both the societal and family levels.

This early memory of my grandfather speaking Kurdish is one of my first encounters with the complex relationships between language and identity, and it has had a profound impact on both my personal life and my academic pursuits. Since then, I have often wondered: What if I had grown up bilingual, speaking both Turkish and Kurdish? Would my bilingualism have been an advantage or a disadvantage in a predominantly Turkish-speaking society? Either way, I wish I had been the one to decide whether to maintain or abandon my heritage language. These questions about the negotiation of linguistic repertoires in family settings have become central to my research.

Throughout my life, I have witnessed both internal and external forces shaping language choices, practices, and management within my family. My maternal grandparents actively encouraged the use of the Turkmen dialect, promoting linguistic continuity across generations. In contrast, my paternal grandfather's reluctance to pass on Kurdish was

likely influenced by external sociopolitical forces. Growing up in this multilingual and multicultural family, I experienced a stronger attachment to one cultural heritage than the other. These experiences have left me with a fundamental question: What language policies and decisions are negotiated within families to support or discourage the use of particular languages?

### **1.3 Experiencing Multilingualism in a Monolingual Educational Landscape**

From my primary school years through university, I was primarily surrounded by a monolingual Turkish environment, both in education and public life, as a result of the nation-state ideology promoting a Turkish-only language policy (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012). However, I often wondered about other children from multilingual and multicultural families, like myself, who remained silent about their diverse backgrounds. I questioned why Turkish-only monolingual education was considered the sole path to national unity and how this stance led to misconceptions about the nature of multilingual education and multiculturalism.

My nearly three years of teaching experience after earning a bachelor's degree in Turkish Language and Literature Teaching gave me deeper insights into the complexities that bilingual and multilingual students face, particularly Kurdish-speaking and Arabic-speaking children in Turkish public schools. These students' experiences highlighted the significant challenges that multilingual children encounter due to the disconnect between their home language and the official language of schooling. Many ethnic minority children struggle upon entering primary school, as they must navigate a school environment that marginalizes both their language and identity.

Addressing these challenges, Gelir (2018) conducted an ethnographic study with Kurdish preschool children in Turkey and found that these children mediated their language and literacy learning by using Kurmanji alongside Turkish. His findings offer important insights into the role of minority languages in second language acquisition, even in officially monolingual settings. Gelir (2018, p. 217) notes that "the children's home language still mediates their second language and literacy learning, even though the setting is constrained by a prescriptive curriculum that adheres to a strict monolingual and

monocultural ideology”. By integrating the minority language into the learning process, Gelir made visible the voices of these children within the Turkish national education system. His work shows how providing children with agency over their language choices and creating space for self-representation allows them to play an active role in their own language learning.

Building on this, the recent study by Lytra and Gelir (2023) examined how children and teachers negotiate the Turkish-only language policy in a preschool serving Kurdish minority children. They found that both children and teachers, rather than simply adhering to the prescriptive monolingual policy, adapted and contested it within their social interactions. The study highlights that children were not merely passive recipients of the policy but active agents, using their linguistic repertoires to navigate both official language requirements and their own communicative needs. Importantly, Lytra and Gelir (2023) underscored that while the children complied with the Turkish-only policy in formal classroom interactions, they continued to use Kurmanji during private peer conversations, creating what Canagarajah (2004) refers to as “safe houses” – spaces free from surveillance where their linguistic agency could flourish.

The agency that children enact in navigating monolingual educational environments is not limited to the classroom. This agency extends beyond school settings and into their multilingual home environments, where children continue to negotiate and reshape the languages they use. I observed this firsthand during my MA research with children from Turkish-speaking families attending Turkish complementary schools in London. In the next section, I explain how I came to study children’s agency in Turkish-speaking families in London, focusing on how they navigate and negotiate their linguistic choices in multilingual, majority English-speaking contexts.

## **1.4 My Path to a PhD: Exploring Children’s Agency in Turkish-Speaking Families in London**

My path toward a PhD was shaped by my interest in multilingualism within Turkish-speaking communities in the UK, which began during my MA research. My previous experiences in Turkey had exposed me to the complexities of minority languages and cultures, which later framed my research interests. In the UK, Turkish-speaking

communities encompass a diverse range of identities, including Cypriot Turks, Turkish-speaking Kurds, and other migrants from mainland Turkey and EU countries (Creese, Baraç, et al., 2007). These variations in the Turkish language are most strongly represented in London, where approximately 75% of the UK's Turkish-speaking population resides (Uysal, 2014). Given this concentration, I chose to conduct my research in London, aiming to represent the diverse varieties of Turkish found in the UK. In migrant families, it is often observed that the first generation has little or no knowledge of the dominant language spoken in the host country, while their children—the second and third generations—acquire greater proficiency in the dominant language by the age of two, primarily through exposure in mainstream educational settings (Beziçoglu-Goktolga & Yagmur, 2018). As a result of this language shift, many immigrant families aim to preserve and transmit their mother tongue and culture to younger generations through complementary schools. Turkish-speaking communities in London have a long history, spanning over 50 years of establishing such supplementary schooling. This inspired me to focus my master's research on the language development of Turkish-speaking communities in these complementary schools, drawing on the perspectives of teachers, parents, and students as part of a case study for my dissertation.

For my MA research, I worked with Turkish complementary schoolteachers and students aged 9 to 12 in London. One of the most valuable contributions of this study was the opportunity to learn how to build connections with multilingual and multicultural Turkish children. I participated in national and religious holiday celebrations and visited families within my social network in London. Through these visits, I observed children's interactions with their parents and siblings outside of the educational setting. Issa (2005, p. 22) argues that “the use of Turkish within Turkish-speaking households is still relatively strong, as a great majority of Turkish-speaking children start school having heard and spoken mainly Turkish” (p. 22). However, during my research, I encountered numerous instances where parents expressed frustration over their children's reluctance to attend Turkish classes at supplementary schools, as well as resistance to learning Turkish. A small number of parents were even deeply concerned about the potential loss of language between generations.

This led me to reconsider the focus of my future research. I realised that studying family dynamics, rather than the school environment, would provide a richer context for exploring language practices and ideologies. There were two main reasons for this shift. First, educational settings, as Lytra (2012) and Çavuşoğlu (2021) highlight, often prioritise standard language practices, such as the teaching of standard Turkish in Turkish complementary schools. In these formal environments, there is an attempt to present a unified cultural and linguistic identity, often marginalising regional varieties like Cypriot Turkish. However, the home environment offers a more fluid and variable space where diverse language negotiations occur, allowing families to express different, and at times competing, values attached to standard Turkish and its regional varieties. By focusing on the home, I could uncover these broader negotiations and reveal hidden stories about family language policies, which are influenced by migration histories and personal or professional transnational experiences.

Second, as children grow older and gain more independence, they develop the ability to express their preferences and dislikes more clearly (Heath, 2012, p. 20). This allows for more complex discussions with parents and children about language and identity, making the family setting an ideal site for studying these dynamics. This facilitates more intricate discussions between parents and children concerning language and identity, positioning the family context as an ideal setting for exploring these dynamics. In fact, this is consistent with the perspectives documented in Lytra's (2012, p. 86) study, where parents often express concern that "our Turkish will be lost" among British-born generations. These parents, especially those raised in the UK, often compare their and their children's Turkish competence against an imagined "native" speaker norm based in Turkey or Cyprus, which shapes their anxieties about language loss (Çavuşoğlu, 2021). Thus, focusing on the home environment enables a deeper understanding of how parents and children negotiate language use in response to these anxieties, revealing hidden tensions between maintaining their home language and adapting to the linguistic environments they inhabit.

Although family language policies (FLP) have been studied in monolingual families, much of the research on bi/multilingual home environments has focused on the importance of promoting and maintaining heritage languages at home. Children influence each other's socialisation and can thus be considered agents in this process (Revis, 2016).

They are dynamic and active meaning-makers, “as shaped by and shaping larger social structures and institutions” (Lytra, 2011, p. 27). In this sense, the conceptualisation of agency in children transcends the simplistic binary of resistance versus compliance. Instead, agency emerges as part of the ongoing, evolving interactions within the family and the broader socio-political context (Ahearn, 2001), aligning with Said and Zhu (2019) argument that agency is context-specific, with children’s actions varying across different spaces and times. This context-specific nature of child agency is better demonstrated through ethnographic methods, which is why I adopt ethnography as a key methodology in my research.

Previous FLP studies have primarily focused on parent-child interactions in multilingual families, with most viewing language policies as a one-way transmission from parents to children. While early FLP research predominantly focused on parental strategies for transmitting minority languages, more recent work highlights the importance of viewing children as active participants in shaping FLP (Bergroth & Palviainen, 2017; Fogle & King, 2013; Gyogi, 2015; Kheirkhah & Cekaite, 2018; Knoll & Becker, 2023; Said & Zhu, 2019; Smith-Christmas, 2020; Smith-Christmas, 2021; Soares et al., 2020; Wilson, 2020). Children are not passive recipients of language policies but are capable of resisting, adapting, and transforming the linguistic norms within their families (Smith-Christmas, 2021). This aligns with Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration, which emphasises that children, like adults, navigate social structures and norms, contributing to their transformation through reflexive actions (Esser et al., 2016). Thus, child agency must be seen as fluid and relational, shaped by their generational positioning and interactions with their surroundings over time (Bollig & Kelle, 2016). Despite the growing attention to child agency in FLP research, the role of extended family members -such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents- has been less explored (Smith-Christmas, 2014).

In the case of Turkish-speaking communities in the UK, strong family ties within both the nuclear family and the wider community play a crucial role. Traditional values are continuously reproduced as a means of expressing identity, with considerable efforts made to connect younger generations to these values (Küçükcan, 1999). However, these efforts have not been sufficiently examined in terms of how intergenerational interactions are multidirectional, reflecting mutual influences and negotiations across generations. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of how intergenerational interactions

within Turkish-speaking families are shaped, particularly focusing on how children's preferences can influence family dynamics. By altering language practices, children play an active role in transforming power relations across generations, challenging traditional norms and expectations within the family (Smith-Christmas, 2014).

Despite the growing recognition of children's role in FLP, Smith-Christmas (2021) point out that FLP research has often failed to fully incorporate insights from childhood studies. The tendency in earlier studies to treat children merely as 'products' of parental ideologies has limited the field of childhood studies' ability to grasp the depth of children's contributions to language practices and policies (Abebe, 2019; Gallagher, 2019). FLP's emphasis on language maintenance, for instance, often frames child agency as either resistance or resourcefulness, with little attention paid to the everyday practices through which agency is enacted over time and space (Bollig & Kelle, 2016). Incorporating insights from childhood studies, FLP research can benefit from a closer examination of how agency is realised in children's linguistic practices. Therefore, by integrating insights from childhood studies (see in Chapter 3), this research benefits from a deeper exploration of how agency manifests in children's linguistic practices.

In this study, I aim to address these gaps by exploring how Turkish-speaking children in London enact their agency in shaping family language policies. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks outlined by Ahearn (2001), I conceptualise child agency as emerging from interactions within specific socio-political contexts. By centring children's perspectives through methods such as language portraits (LP) and scrapbooks as well as observation of families, this research aligns with the arguments posited by Smith-Christmas (2017) for the conceptualisation of families as interconnected systems rather than mere collections of individuals. In this context, children within these families are recognized as active agents.

As global migration continues to shape cultural landscapes, understanding how heritage languages and values are maintained or transformed in diasporic communities is increasingly pertinent. This study addresses the critical gap in literature regarding the role of children as active agents in these processes, highlighting their influence on family dynamics and language practices. Given the growing interest in family language policies and the dynamics of multilingualism, this research not only contributes to the academic

discourse but also offers insights into the evolving nature of cultural identity within Turkish-speaking communities in the UK. By examining these interactions, I aim to shed light on the complexities of agency and power relations across generations, ultimately providing a nuanced understanding of how children navigate and shape their linguistic and cultural environments in a rapidly changing world. Through a focus on children's active roles in shaping language ideologies and practices, I aim to offer new insights into how linguistic repertoires are negotiated and redefined by children within their multilingual families, thus broadening the scope of FLP research.

In this thesis, the following research questions have emerged.

How do children negotiate their linguistic repertoires in their multilingual, intergenerational families?

How do children influence and reshape family language policies through their everyday language practices and interactions?

In what ways do children's language ideologies and management efforts contribute to the transformation, maintenance, or adaptation of family language practices?

From these sub questions above my real passion is to find the answer to my overall question for the study: *“How do children negotiate and enact their agency through FLP in Turkish-speaking families in the UK?”*

## **1.5. Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1, the Autobiographical Chapter, introduces me as the researcher and provides an account of my personal and academic journey, highlighting how these have influenced the conceptualisation and development of the research. Chapter 2 examines the context of my study, discussing the historical, social, and linguistic backdrop against which this research is situated. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework that underpins the study. It explores key concepts related to child agency in family language policy and in Childhood studies while drawing on sociolinguistic theories such as agency and linguistic repertoire, with a particular focus on the children in multilingual families and their interactions within the broader sociocultural environment.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach, focusing on the ethnographic methods used to explore family language practices and child agency. It provides details on participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and the use of child-friendly tools to understand children participants' lived experiences. This chapter also addresses the ethical considerations and reflexivity involved in conducting ethnographic research in multilingual families. Chapters 5 through 8 focus on the analysis of data collected from four different families, offering insights into the negotiation of language ideologies, practices, and management, as well as the role of children's agency in these negotiations. These chapters, drawing on data from Emir's Family, Arin's Family, Omer's Family and Asmin's Family, explore how children's linguistic choices and practices shape family language policies, with particular attention to the interplay between children's agency, parental expectations, and the intergenerational transmission of linguistic resources.

Finally, Chapter 9 offers a conclusion, drawing together the key findings from the previous chapters. It discusses the broader implications of the study for understanding family language policies, child agency, and multilingualism in the context of migration, while reflecting on the limitations of the research and suggesting possible directions for future study.

# **Chapter 2 Context of Study**

## **2.1 Introduction**

Turkish-speaking communities in the United Kingdom represent a vibrant and multifaceted demographic, contributing to the rich cultural tapestry of the country. This chapter explores the demographic makeup, migration history, population dynamics, linguistic diversity, and the educational landscape of their children, with particular attention to the role of language within families. Drawing on the latest national census data, I provide an overview of the current state of Turkish-speaking communities in the UK. The chapter also unravels the pivotal role played by Turkish complementary schools in preserving cultural heritage and supporting educational endeavours within the communities. Furthermore, I examine the dichotomy between standard Turkish and Cypriot Turkish, shedding light on the linguistic intricacies that influence identity and communication.

This contextual background is crucial for understanding how language policies are shaped within families, as it reveals the societal and cultural factors that influence language use and negotiation. By grounding my analysis in this context, I can more effectively explore how children, within the framework of Family Language Policy (FLP), navigate these dynamics, enact agency, and contribute to the management of family language policy in response to broader community influences.

## **2.2 Turkish-speaking communities in the UK**

Turkish-speaking communities living in the UK are comprised of Cypriot Turks from Northern Cyprus and Turks and Turkish-speaking Kurds from mainland Turkey and other Turkish speaking people from EU countries (Lytra, 2012).

Building on the complexity of linguistic practices and variations within Turkish-speaking communities in the UK, it is essential to recognise that these communities exhibit linguistic, ethnic, and cultural diversity. The term ‘Turkish-speaking communities’ rather

than ‘Turkish-speaking community’ is used in this study to reflect the multiplicity of identities, acknowledging the historical, political, and social factors that influence self-identification among Cypriot Turks, mainland Turks, and Kurdish speakers. This choice is grounded in the acknowledgment that Turkish-speaking communities exhibit diversity in linguistic usage, influenced by factors such as regional variations, dialects, and the impact of contact with English. Scholars such as Çavuşoğlu (2021), Lytra (2012), Issa (2008), Enneli et al. (2005) and Mehmet Ali (2001) have aptly recognised this diversity within the Turkish diaspora, emphasising the existence of various linguistic practices and the emergence of distinct varieties, such as Londralı (Londoner) Turkish, as identified by Issa (2005). Aligning with these scholars, I use the term ‘Turkish-speaking communities’ to reflect the multifaceted linguistic realities present within the research group I am studying.

Self-identification among Turkish-speaking communities is shaped by a complex interplay of historical, political, and social factors, and does not always align with linguistic proficiency. Individuals may identify as Turkish, Turkish Cypriot, or Kurdish-Kurmanji based on ancestry, cultural affiliation, or socio-political positioning, rather than solely on the basis of language use (Yilmaz, 2016). This fluidity in identity formation is particularly evident in diaspora settings, where heritage languages hold deep emotional and symbolic significance beyond their communicative function. For example, as noted in Yilmaz’s (2016) study, Kurdish identity is not solely dependent on language proficiency; individuals may identify as Kurdish regardless of their ability to speak the language. In diaspora settings, many Kurds express a strong desire to learn or reconnect with their heritage language as a way of reinforcing their self-identification. This demonstrates the deep emotional connection to language, which serves as a symbol of identity, belonging, and cultural continuity, even when its everyday use is limited.

### **2.2.1 Migration**

The migration of Turkish-speaking communities to the UK has a long and intricate history, characterised by distinct phases and motivations for each group.

The earliest waves of migration to the UK emerged in the early 20th century was Cypriot Turkish migration which was predominantly driven by economic hardship prevalent in Cyprus in the 1920s and 1930s. The post-World War II era marked a surge in Turkish

Cypriot migration, triggered by the devastating impact of the war on the Cypriot economy and the ensuing hostilities between the Cypriot Turkish and Cypriot Greek communities in the 1950s and early 1960s. These conflicts exacerbated economic hardship and created a climate of instability, prompting many Cypriots to seek refuge and opportunities in the UK (Issa, 2005).

In 1974, a Greek military coup, aimed at uniting the island with mainland Greece, prompted a Turkish intervention from mainland Turkey. This intervention was undertaken to protect approximately 120,000 Turkish Cypriots, resulting in the partition of the island into Turkish Cypriot North and the Greek Cypriot South (Issa, 2005). Fleeing the violence and instability that engulfed the island, a significant number of Turkish and Greek Cypriots sought safety and opportunities in the UK.

Turkish migration from mainland Turkey started as a part of wider migration to Europe as the legal workers during the 1970s. Economic factors played a significant role in driving this migration, as Turkey grappled with economic challenges and sought to alleviate labour shortages in the UK. Turkish immigrants worked in the textile industry and were later joined by their families. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a substantial increase in Turkish migration from mainland Turkey. Following the military coup in Turkey in 1980, a group of urban professionals, including doctors, solicitors, teachers, and academics, sought refuge in Britain for political reasons. These individuals were predominantly graduates of Turkish universities, seeking political asylum in the UK (Issa, 2004). Another factor that historically contributed to Turkish migration was the Ankara Agreement<sup>2</sup>, forged between Turkey and the UK in 1963 (Karayayla, 2018). While it served as a motivation for migration until the UK's departure from the EU, the visa scheme was closed to new applicants after Brexit, although Turkish Workers who held the visa as of 31 December 2020 can continue to live and work in the UK. The agreement

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<sup>2</sup> the Ankara Agreement refers to an agreement between Turkey and the European Union, which came into effect in 1963. It established an association between Turkey and the European Economic Community, aiming to promote economic integration and cooperation Sirkeci, I., Tilbe, F., Bilecen, T., Dedeoglu, S., Seker, B. D., Unutulmaz, K. O., Costu, Y., & Kesici, M. R. (2016). *Little Turkey in Great Britain*. Lulu. com.

allowed Turkish nationals to enter and work in EU member states, including the UK, with certain privileges. This led the immigrants from Turkey to establish small businesses, including ownership of restaurants, kebab shops, off-licence shops, barber shops and cleaning companies (R. King et al., 2008).

Kurdish people have been migrating to the UK since the 1970s from Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. As being the largest ethnic group in Turkey, Kurdish population make up approximately a fifth (approximately 17 million) of the total population of the country (Demir, 2012). Despite their significant presence, there has been suppression towards their ethnic identity, cultural and linguistic rights as well as they have experienced socio-economic disadvantages and confront various forms of deprivation and exclusion within Turkey over the years. Hence, the Kurdish migration from Turkey to the UK began in the 1980s, primarily driven by both the 1980's military coup and the conflict and escalating oppression perpetrated by the Turkish state towards the Kurdish population in Southeast Turkey (Mehmet Ali, 2001; Yilmaz, 2016).

During the early 1990s, a significant number of Turkish and Kurdish population also started to migrate to the UK because of the religious conflicts (Issa, 2016). These migrants, who felt marginalised due to their Alevi identity and culture (moved from central/eastern Anatolia (Demir, 2012). Alevis constitute a non-Sunni historical and national minority in Turkey, encompassing not only Turkish speakers but also Kurmanji, Zaza, Arabic, and Albanian-speaking communities (Karademir & Şen, 2021). Historically, the Alevis were marginalised during the Ottoman era, a trend that continued into the Turkish Republic. The perception of Alevis as full of ambiguities and assimilation campaigns against them persisted, particularly intensifying after the 1980 military coup. The coup marked a pivotal moment in the Turkish state's efforts to promote Sunni Islam as a cornerstone of national identity, with compulsory religious education, based on Sunni tenets, introduced in schools to enforce this ideology (Issa, 2016; Karademir & Şen, 2021). These measures reinforced the socio-religious exclusion of Alevis, contributing to their marginalisation. As a result, the primary immigrant demographic from Turkey was predominantly composed of Alevis with either Kurdish or Turkish ethnic backgrounds in 1990s.

Since the 2000s, Turkish and Kurdish migration to the UK has continued, though with evolving dynamics. Economic and political instability in Turkey -especially after the 2016 coup attempt and the purge followed- has contributed to migration among both ethnic Turks and Kurds, with many seeking greater security and educational opportunities for their families. Additionally, recent arrivals include skilled professionals, students, and entrepreneurs, who, unlike earlier migrants, often integrate quickly into professional sectors in the UK (Sirkeci et al., 2016). The Turkish and Kurdish communities have established strong diasporic networks, which aid new arrivals and help maintain cultural identity, while also fostering a diverse and multilingual population in the UK. These recent patterns reflect the changing motives and backgrounds of migrants from Turkey, shaping the contemporary Turkish and Kurdish communities observed during my fieldwork.

Therefore, Turkish-speaking communities display significant diversity on various fronts, encompassing their background and motivations for migration, including ethnicity (e.g., Turkish and Kurdish), religious affiliations (e.g., Sunni and Alevi beliefs), language (e.g., Standard Turkish, Cypriot Turkish, and Kurdish), as well as factors like social class and political interests. These factors are intricately connected with their unique migration trajectories.

### **2.2.2 Population**

The population of Turkish-speaking communities in the UK is subject to varying estimations.

The exact number of Turkish-speaking people in the UK is presently uncertain; nevertheless, the population comprising individuals from Turkey and Northern Cyprus including their UK-born children is estimated to fall within the range of 180,000 to 250,000 (Sirkeci & Esipova, 2013), mainly residing in the Greater London (Lytra, 2012).

The census data lacks a distinction between Turkish and Greek Cypriots which makes it difficult to estimate the numbers of Cypriot Turkish migration (Issa, 2005). Recent data from the Office for National Statistics in the 2021 census (ONS, 2021) shed light on the demographic population of Turkish, Cypriot Turkish, and Kurdish communities in England and Wales. Notably, 31,476 individuals identified their ethnicity as Cypriot Turkish, with a significant concentration of 24,095 residing in London boroughs. The

broader category, encompassing both Turkish and Cypriot Turkish ethnicities, accounted for a total of 161,314 individuals, and nearly 40% of this population chose London as their settlement. Moreover, the census recorded 92,984 people identifying their ethnicity as Kurdish, and approximately one-third of them chose London as their place of residence. It is important to note that these individuals may not all be from Turkey, as Kurdish identity can also encompass those from regions in Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Similar to the situation with the Cypriot Turkish population, it is challenging to provide precise numbers for Kurdish individuals born in Turkey and migrated to the UK. The available figures only indicate the country of origin and not the specific ethnic group of immigrants. The absence of a specific ethnic group category for individuals of Turkish and Kurdish background in the UK census has led many to select the 'white-other' option within this classification, as noted by the Greater London Authority (GLA, 2009). This classification oversimplifies the rich diversity within these communities, resulting in an inaccurate and potentially underestimated representation of their size. This inherent problem in the census classification has been recognised by scholars such as Cavdar (2020) and Enneli et al. (2005).

The oversights in categorisation not only diminish the visibility of Turkish and Kurdish communities but also pose challenges in accurately capturing the nuances of their cultural identities within the broader social fabric of the UK. Addressing these limitations is critical for a more comprehensive understanding of the Turkish and Kurdish communities and their contributions to the multicultural landscape of the United Kingdom.

On the other hand, in a recent announcement, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that approximately 400,000 people of Turkish and Cypriot origin currently reside in the UK. Among them, approximately 250,000 individuals migrated from Turkey, while 150,000 people migrated from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) to the UK (TC Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2018).

### **2.2.3 Languages**

Turkish belongs to the Altaic language subfamily and is spoken primarily in Turkey, Cyprus, and various regions in Europe and the Middle East even though there are different dialects and regional differences. In contrast, Kurdish is classified as an Indo-European

language with three major dialects: Kurmanji, Sorani, and Zaza. The Refugee Council<sup>3</sup> notes that Kurdish individuals from Turkey predominantly speak Kurmanji, whereas those from Iraq use Sorani as their primary language (GLA, 2009).

The census data, collected every ten years, provides a glimpse into the linguistic diversity of Turkish-speaking communities, offering statistics alongside other information such as ethnicity, religion, and education.

In the last two UK censuses, the question ‘What is your main language?’ asked to the respondents to provide information about their primary language. However, the framing of the question assumed that individuals could only identify a single ‘main’ language, or in the Scottish version, just one language other than English spoken at home. Consequently, participants were not given the opportunity to specify multiple languages, leading to a categorisation of ‘main language’ versus English that inadequately captures the intricate linguistic diversity in the current UK landscape. Studies indicate that respondents often underreported their use of languages other than English, as interpretations of ‘main language’ varied (Sebba, 2018). Some perceived it as their most proficient language, others as the one used most frequently, and yet others as the language they felt emotionally connected to. Scholars argue that a more nuanced question, allowing for the reporting of multiple languages, would significantly enhance data quality and utility. For instance, Matras et al. (2016) suggested that a question which avoids forcing respondents to choose between English and another language (such as their heritage or community language) and allows them to list more than one language alongside English might be more suitable. This approach of limiting language repertoire to only ‘main’ language raises questions about how the linguistic landscape would be portrayed if individuals had the opportunity to report their full linguistic repertoire.

When examining the Census 2021 data, it reveals that 112,978 people identified Turkish as their main language, constituting 0.2% of the total population and ranking 15<sup>th</sup> most spoken language in England and Wales. Additionally, 66,443 individuals identified Kurdish as their main language, accounting for 0.1% of the total population (See Table X).

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

In comparison, the 2011 data indicated that 99,423 people identified Turkish as their main language, making up 0.2% of the total population and ranking 12th. Furthermore, 43,238 individuals identified Kurdish as their main language, representing 0.1% of the total population.

<i>England and Wales</i>	<b>2021</b>			<b>2011</b>		
	Number	Percentage %	Rank	Number	Percentage %	Rank
<i>TURKISH</i>	112,978	0.2	15	99,423	0.2	12
<i>KURDISH</i>	66,443	0.1	22	48,239	0.1	24

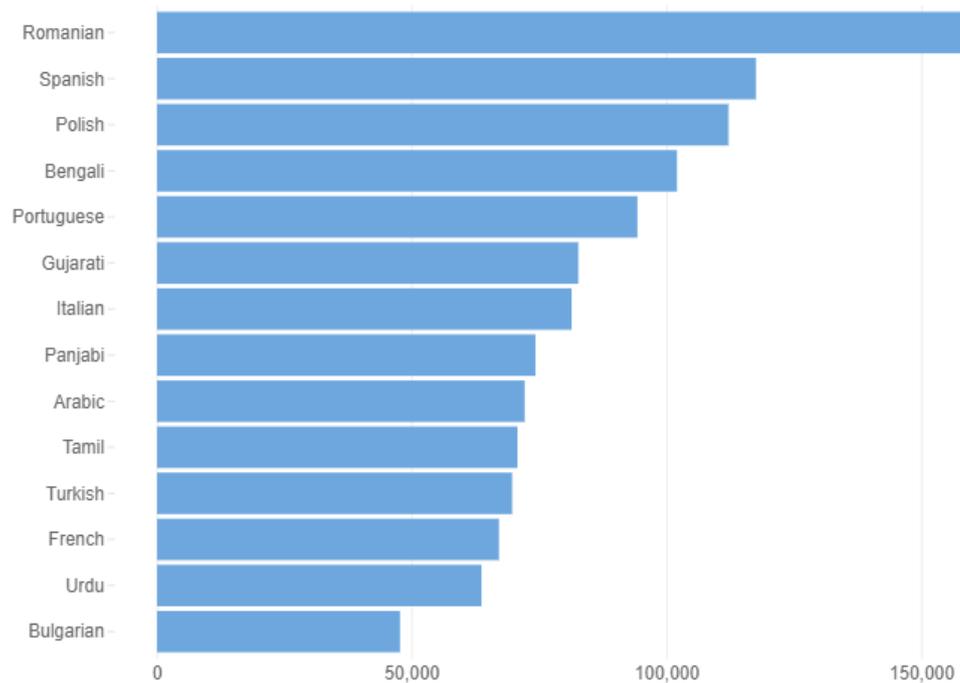
**Table 1:** People who identified their main language as Turkish and Kurdish in the Census (England and Wales) in 2011 and 2021 (ONS, 2011&2021).

The Census 2021 data reveals that Turkish-speaking communities are distributed across various regions in the UK. However, a substantial number of these communities choose to settle in London, particularly in areas such as Enfield, Haringey, Hackney, Camden, Islington, Lewisham and Waltham Forest. Additionally, significant populations of Turkish speakers are found in cities like Cambridge, Manchester, Birmingham, and certain parts of Northwest England. This dispersion pattern emphasises both the diversity and concentration of Turkish-speaking communities across the United Kingdom.

London stands as a unique hub, hosting approximately 100,000 individuals of Turkish, Kurdish, and Turkish Cypriot backgrounds. In London, the presence of Turkish, Kurdish, and Cypriot communities is distinctly strong, forming enclaves that are intertwined with robust economic and sociocultural institutions. This vibrancy is evident through various community organisations scattered across North London and the celebration of numerous community festivals such as Newroz (the Kurdish New Year celebration), the Turkish Film Festival, and the Kurdish Film Festival; national celebration days such as Turkish National Children’s Day, celebration of Turkish Republic and religious celebrations such as Eid or Ramadan, Eid ul Adha or Kurban Bayrami. Streets like Green Lanes in Haringey, and those in Hackney, Enfield, Tottenham, and Edmonton, teem with Turkish

establishments, including shops, restaurants, cafes, jewellery stores, associations, and various enterprises that primarily cater to local communities. (Sirkeci et al., 2016).

The Turkish, Kurdish, and Turkish Cypriot communities, integral to London's rich cultural tapestry, are also influential contributors to the linguistic mosaic of the capital. As depicted in Figure 1, Turkish is ranked as the 11th most spoken language in the London region in the 2021 census, boasting over 60,000 speakers.



**Figure 1.** Languages spoken by more than 40,000 people London in 2021 (GLA, 2021)

### 2.1.4 Education

In the Census 2021 (ONS, 2021), a significant majority of pupils, constituting 79.3%, were reported as having a first language known or believed to be English, while 20.2% were recorded with a first language other than English in England and Wales. Furthermore, London exhibits a noteworthy presence of school pupils known or believed to use a first language other than English. In 2020, 44.2% of pupils were reported to use a first language other than English, experiencing a slight decrease to 43.9% in 2021, followed by a modest increase to 44.0% in 2022. The data suggests a complex interplay

of factors influencing language preferences and highlights the importance of ongoing monitoring and targeted interventions to support diverse language needs in the educational landscape of the capital.

In areas such as Haringey, Hackney, and Enfield, the Turkish-speaking communities' school pupils constitute a significant portion of the total school-aged children population. For instance, the ethnic composition of the student population in Hackney, in 2005 revealed that 8.1% of primary pupils and 7.6% of secondary school pupils were recorded as Turkish or Turkish Cypriot. Additionally, 1.8% of primary pupils and 1.7% of secondary school pupils were identified as Kurdish. In Enfield during the same year, 5.5% of pupils were recorded as Turkish, 3.5% as Turkish Cypriot, and 1.6% as Kurdish. Ethnicity data from Islington in 2004 indicated that 4.5% of pupils were recorded as Turkish or Turkish Cypriot, 1.5% as Turkish, and 1.1% as Kurdish. These figures underscore the diverse ethnic makeup of school communities in these areas, emphasising the importance of recognising and accommodating the unique cultural needs of students from Turkish, Turkish Cypriot, and Kurdish backgrounds (GLA, 2009). The substantial presence of Turkish-speaking students in these areas underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the unique cultural and educational needs of this community within the broader educational landscape. Recognising and supporting the linguistic and cultural diversity of these pupils is essential for creating inclusive and effective educational environments.

One of the main strategies to promote and support the minority communities is complementary schools. Complementary schools, known as 'Saturday schools' are established to provide language and cultural education for minority/ heritage language-speaking children. These schools play a significant role in language maintenance and cultural transmission.

## **2.2 The role of Turkish complementary schools in Turkish-speaking communities**

As one of the highly diverse linguistic landscapes, the UK has 7.7% population who speak a home language other than English and London has been the most linguistically diverse area in England with more than 300 different languages spoken in mainstream schools (Von Ahn et al., 2010). Data from the population of English school children in London

illustrated that nearly 45% of the primary school children marked a language other than English as the language spoken at home and over 35% of pupils in secondary education (DCSF, 2009). According to the census carried out in 2011, which contained the question ‘What is your main language?’ asked for the first time, more than 1.7 million Londoners (26% of households in London) who were over the age of three recorded that they speak a language other than English as their main language (ONS, 2012). In the latest census in 2021, a total of 1.83 million London residents aged 3 and above indicated a main language other than English, constituting more than a fifth (22 percent) of the city’s population (ONS, 2021). However, the UK has been criticised for failing to fulfil its linguistic potential<sup>4</sup>. A telling example is that the proportion of pupils taking a GCSE in a modern language subject at the end of Key Stage 4 has decreased from 76% to 47% between 2002 and 2017. Similarly, A level entries for modern languages drastically decreased from about 40,000 to 27,000 between 1996 and 2017 (DfE, 2018). This sharp and continuing decline in the exam entries showed that there is a concerted action needed for modern/foreign and community language learning in the UK and herein family language policy (FLP) studies may provide insightful knowledge to understand the nature of the continuity of these languages.

*The Languages for the Future* report published by the British Council (2013) illuminated the alarming skills shortage in the most critical ten foreign languages for the UK’s future economy and global standing: Spanish, Arabic, French, Mandarin Chinese, German, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Turkish and Japanese were listed as the most essential languages in the UK over the next 20 years. The teaching of the languages other than English has been carried out by mainstream schools and community-based language schools. It has been estimated that there are between 3,000 and 5,000 supplementary schools in the UK (Borthwick, 2018). Even though supplementary/complementary schools encourage the communities to value their home languages and build connections between home life and supplementary schools, there is little public visibility for these community-based organisations. Hence, the negative perceptions about the languages spoken across the UK can reveal the perceived status of different languages in society:

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<sup>4</sup> The British Academy; with the Academy of Medical Sciences; the Royal Academy of Engineering; and the Royal Society (2019), [Languages in the UK: A call for action](#).

“Bilingualism seems to be considered an asset if it is learned rather than acquired (i.e. natively), and/or if it involves a language of (relative) prestige. Conversely, bilingualism is perceived as a deficit if acquired in an immigrant/minority home, if it is a non-standard language if it has limited or no 'market' value, if it will interfere with the learning of the majority language and by those who believe that it will lead to semi-lingualism. The former is more often associated with majority language speakers learning another language; the latter is linked primarily to community language speakers” (Taylor, 2013, p. 3).

The distinction between these two perceptions to language learning and bilingualism appears in mainstream education as The National Curriculum offers languages under the group of commonly-taught languages (EU languages such as French, German and Spanish) and less commonly-taught (community languages such as Urdu, Bengali, Turkish, Gujarati) languages. Since the latter group are less commonly offered by state schools, the language teaching of them is provided mainly by complementary schools (Tinsley & Board, 2016). Complementary schools have the vision to bring language skills and cultural knowledge into classrooms where children can be part of their minority communities outside of the home settings. Although complementary schools mainly provide the educational provision of minority languages, there is limited support from the dominant society as much of the government support and funding for the teaching of minority languages have been significantly reduced or have disappeared entirely (Borthwick, 2018).

Turkish complementary schools in the UK emerged in the 1950s as a response to concerns that Turkish children were growing up under the influence of English/British culture and losing their identities (TLCEC of UK, 2006). These schools aimed to teach the Turkish language and culture in order to preserve the community's heritage. The lessons primarily took place on weekends, lasting two to three hours in classrooms rented for the weekend from mainstream schools, spanning approximately four hours in total. Over time, the focus of these schools shifted to addressing underachievement among Turkish-speaking youth in mainstream schools (Çavuşoğlu, 2014). They began offering extra tuition in subjects like Maths, English, and Science to raise achievement levels at the weekends. The schools also aimed to educate parents about the UK education system and increase

their involvement. Therefore, these schools served to the goal of maintaining language and culture and seek success to raise school achievement of Turkish-speaking children.

Operating as an umbrella organisation, The Turkish Language and Culture Educational Consortium (TLCEC) serves as a representative body for the collaborative work of the vast majority of Turkish-speaking supplementary schools in the UK. One of the aims pursued by TLCEC is achieving success in GCSE and A-Level exams for Turkish language. The TLCEC also argues that students who learn their mother tongue and culture experience a sense of pride in their identity and gain self-confidence (See Figure 2). This positive impact extends to academic performance, leading to improved grades in schools. While the TLCEC emphasises the school's primary function as preserving linguistic and cultural identities, this perspective seems to be complemented by other discourses in the responses of young participants in recent studies. For instance, Çavuşoğlu's (2014) ethnographic study, which focused on young Turkish-speaking participants, revealed that six out of seven interviewees stated specific reasons for attending Turkish complementary schools. These included preparing for Turkish GCSE exams, obtaining a valuable resource for future employment, and developing a means of communication when travelling to Cyprus or Turkey. This suggest that a nuanced perspective on the perceived functions of these schools for the educators and the students.



**Figure 2:** A leaflet prepared by Turkish language, culture and education consortium of UK (TLCE of UK)<sup>5</sup>

One of the early studies on Turkish-speaking (TS) communities, Mehmet Ali (2001) highlighted the invisibility of these communities in the education system over the 50 years of settlement and examined the educational needs and aspirations to deal with underachievement. She pointed out the urgent need for the three main stakeholders (Local Education Authorities, schools, and TS communities) to work together to break out of the invisibility.

As a result of the community-based effort, there are currently 60 complementary schools<sup>6</sup> and 37 mainstream schools<sup>7</sup> where Turkish is taught in after-school classes, the majority of them located in London. According to recent data from the Educational Counsel Office of the Turkish Embassy in London for the 2024-2025 academic year, these schools provide Turkish language education across the UK. Apart from transmitting and maintaining mainland Turkish language, culture and identity, these schools have taken the challenge of dealing with underachievement and under-representation in the education

<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from <https://turkegitimkonsorsiyumu.org.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://londra.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2024\\_09/30182147\\_21215921\\_turkdernekokullarilistesi.pdf](https://londra.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2024_09/30182147_21215921_turkdernekokullarilistesi.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://londra.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2024\\_09/30182244\\_26171334\\_ingilizokullarilistesi.pdf](https://londra.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2024_09/30182244_26171334_ingilizokullarilistesi.pdf)

system as Turkish background pupils in mainstream education have been recorded as one of the lowest-achieving minority group since the 1970s (Çavuşoğlu, 2014; Issa, 2008; Mehmet Ali, 2001).

Turkish complementary schools have been the subject of many studies over a decade; in particular, parents' perspective of language and identity in complementary schools (Lytra, 2012), pupil agency (Lytra, 2011), social mobility (Lytra, 2013), multilingualism and multiculturalism (Issa, 2008; Lytra et al., 2010), and language, culture, identity (Çavuşoğlu, 2014; Issa, 2005; Mehmet Ali, 2001) have been examined.

The primary focus of those studies has predominantly centred on examining the dynamics between parents/students and complementary schools. These investigations delve into various aspects, including how parents perceive the language and culture education provided by complementary schools and the perspectives of Turkish-speaking children regarding the education they receive from these supplementary institutions. While existing studies have thoroughly explored the relationships between parents, students, and complementary schools, there has been limited research focused on how Turkish multilingual parents and children interact and negotiate language use within the home. Only a few researchers have investigated this specific aspect, leaving a gap in our understanding of how parent-child dynamics unfold within the context of Turkish complementary education. For instance, Creese, Lytra, et al. (2007) found that Turkish-speaking parents exploit the economic value of Turkish in the local and global markets to encourage their children to attend complementary classes and take GCES and A-level exams. Studies on Turkish-speaking communities in Europe show that bilingual workers often secure higher wages and greater employment stability in sectors such as business, healthcare, and education (Extra & Gorter, 2008). However, the economic value of heritage languages varies based on sociopolitical and institutional recognition. One of the expectations of the families from their children is to earn qualifications for their knowledge of the Turkish language and culture in order to capitalise on the HL knowledge economically (Çavuşoğlu, 2014). Moreover, Baykusoglu (2014) argued that the lack of parental involvement is a significant factor for Turkish pupils' underachievement. He indicated that many parents were reluctant to become involved in their children's learning in mainstream education because of several economic and sociolinguistic factors such as long working hours at the workplace, insufficient language competence in English or lack

of knowledge of the British education system. Issa (2008) also pointed out that the perception of Turkish-speaking youth's cultural identities (i.e. Turkish Cypriot, Mainland Turks or Kurds) by state schools is overall negative according to the responses given to his study. Building on this perspective, Lytra and Baraç (2009) investigated TS young people's multilingual practices and illustrated how the young people used their multilingual capital and their knowledge of regional and diasporic varieties to negotiate meaning and identity options in their interactions with peers and teachers. Following this, they suggest looking at the detailed contextualised interactions of young people such as their media practices, family and peer connections with the local diaspora or the personal/virtual ties with the country of origin.

There has been a growing body of insightful work listed above about the language and identity perspectives among younger Turkish-speaking generations in the UK, teacher-student and peer interactions in complementary schools, parental ideologies about bi/multilingualism and intra-group discussions of the varieties of Turkish. Yet, family language policies in Turkish-speaking communities have been overlooked and I aim to address the gap in the literature by conducting the present research.

Despite the absence of prior research on the family language policies of Turkish-speaking communities in the UK, a recent development in the academic landscape is noteworthy. A special issue has emerged, delving into the exploration of family language policies within Turkish-speaking families (Yagmur & Bohnacker, 2022). This collection of research extends its focus beyond geographical boundaries, encompassing insights from Turkish speaking families in Australia, Belgium, France, Sweden, and the Netherlands. The publication of this special issue marks a significant step forward in the understanding of family language policies within the broader Turkish-speaking diaspora, providing a valuable comparative perspective for the investigations in the UK context. For instance, Et-Bozkurt and Yağmur (2022) studied family language policy among second and third generation Turkish parents in Melbourne, Australia. Their findings indicates that Turkish language maintenance is strongest in families where grandparents live in or near the family home. Grandparents, especially in both working-parent households, play a crucial role in providing daily care for grandchildren, offering intensive Turkish language input for children due to their lower English proficiency. In Kutlay&Bohnacker's (2022) qualitative study with Turkish-speaking children (aged 4 to 7) and their parents in

Sweden, it is found that children are regularly exposed to Turkish media, engaging in activities like singing, listening to Turkish songs, and sharing stories in Turkish. These culturally embedded practices not only foster language development but also link the language to joyful shared experiences. Another study employing large-scale surveys investigated intergenerational differences in FLP of Turkish families in the Netherlands (Bezioglu-Goktolga & Yagmur, 2022). The results show that both first-generation and second-generation parents highly value bilingualism, with second-generation parents expressing a more positive outlook on Dutch-oriented language practices at home. Although language preferences lean towards bilingualism for both generations, the first-generation tends to use more Turkish. Second-generation parents and their third-generation children are more dominant in Dutch, but they still express a preference for Turkish in the home environment. Furthermore, Altinkamis (2022) investigated the effect of different family compositions on FLP of Turkish-speaking families in Flanders, Belgium and found that the role of children as active agents in Family Language Planning play a pivotal role in shaping family language practices. The number and birth order of siblings often influence decision-making in families. Grandparents, particularly in One Parent One Language (OPOL) families, are highlighted as crucial promoters of heritage language, often serving as the primary resource for language exposure.

Building on these comparative insights, my study extends this emerging body of work by focusing on the unique linguistic dynamics within the Turkish-speaking communities in the UK. By including standard Turkish speakers, Kurdish speakers and Cypriot Turkish speakers as research participants, my study also examines the implications of these differences for family language policies, offering a nuanced perspective that complements existing studies.

Having reviewed the details of Turkish-speaking communities in the UK and the studies within complementary schools, it is imperative to shift our focus to a nuanced aspect that underscores the complexity of this linguistic landscape. This next section of the study explores the dichotomy between standard Turkish and Cypriot Turkish, a dichotomy that has gained prominence recently and holds significant implications for the dynamics within these communities as well as my study since both standard Turkish speakers and Cypriot Turkish speakers play essential roles as research participants.

## **2.3 The dichotomy of standard/non-standard Turkish in the UK context**

Turkish language should not be considered as ‘one’ language without varieties in the UK context. The variety called standard Turkish, which is “based on the speech of the educated élites of Western Turkey” (Lytra, 2012, p. 9), has been the language of media and instruction in both Turkey and Northern Cyprus, and Turkish language education in the UK. Standard Turkish played a role in the nation-building process following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the modern Turkish state in the 1920s. Its widespread adoption historically associated its usage with social status, educational opportunities, and economic progress. Additionally, it has been intricately linked to the shaping of the Turkish national identity (Çavuşoğlu, 2021). Since Standard Turkish (ST) is the officially recognized variety, Turkish complementary schools are required to teach ST.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there are the dialects and regional variations within the diaspora apart from standard Turkish. Cypriot Turkish is one of the most prominent varieties spoken in London which shows phonological, structural and lexical differences from standard Turkish due to long-term contact with Cypriot Greek and English. (Issa, 2005; Lytra & Baraç, 2009). Even though a considerably large number of Cypriot Turkish people lives in the UK, Cypriot Turkish is often marked as ‘uneducated’, ‘broken’, ‘incorrect’ by the complementary schoolteachers, students and their parents, whereas standard Turkish is labelled as ‘educated’, ‘prestigious’ ‘proper’, ‘correct’ (Çavuşoğlu & Evripidou, 2018; Lytra, 2015).

In Lytra’s (2012) exploration of language ideologies among parents with children in Turkish complementary schools in London, it was revealed that parents’ perspectives echoed the discourse emphasizing the institutional recognition and authority of Standard Turkish in these classrooms. This discourse drew on the iconic association between the use of Standard Turkish and educated individuals. In terms of the students’ attitudes towards Turkish identity, Lytra (2011) studied Turkish children’s understanding of home language and culture in two complementary schools in London. The findings from this study illustrated that Turkish ‘national’ culture and identity had overwhelmingly appeared in the teaching of cultural content. However, the students seemed to distance themselves

from this particular aspect of Turkish identity. Lytra (2013) also conducted an ethnographic study with Turkish heritage speakers aged 8-12, their teachers and parents. She pointed out that the prestige of standard Turkish (ST) was reinforced through the link to mainstream education and academic success. Some of the tensions and contradictions that pupils and teachers in complementary school classrooms experienced derived from the difference between their actual language use and what is widely regarded as uncontaminated or standard Turkish (Lytra et al., 2010).

In the Cypriot context, Çavuşoğlu (2021) studied the language ideologies of the parents and their children's responses in Turkish complementary schools in London. She illustrated that the teacher discourses of legitimate vs. incorrect language use in Turkish language varieties were resisted by young people in various ways. Using a Bourdieusian perspective, the study illustrated that the legitimisation of one variety of a language over other varieties causes the silencing of those considered as less prestigious (Bourdieu, 2000, 1991) and the iconic representations of standard Turkish create 'otherness' for the other varieties.

Gal and Irvine (1995) explain this legitimisation of standard language ensuring the maintenance of this variety, but reduces the symbolic value (Bourdieu, 1991) of the other versions in three semiotic processes (iconisation, fractal recursivity and erasure). Iconisation is a process which involves "linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence" (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 37). The second process, fractal recursivity "involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level". And erasure "is a process in which ideology [...] renders some persons or activities invisible. [...] a social group or language may be imagined as homogeneous, its internal variation disregarded" (p. 38). In respect to these processes, Lytra (2012) investigated parental language ideologies and identity constructions in two Turkish complementary schools. She demonstrated how the above-mentioned semiotic processes occurred in the parents' evaluative talk. Parents in this study tend to privilege standard Turkish (through the process of iconisation) and evaluated their children and their own Turkish language competence by looking at its link to the self-ascription of 'Turkishness'. She also found that the participants' migration histories and transnational experiences impacted on their assumptions of what counted as

being a native (and non-native) speaker of Turkish (through the process of recursivity). Also, the erasure process appeared to be in operation based on one of the participant's accounts that Turkish speakers from Turkey tend to erase the linguistic diversity of Turkish (through the silencing of Cypriot Turkish in this case). These semiotic processes play a crucial role in analysing the discourses from the settings where the home language variety is different from the standard one. Taking into consideration that two of my participant families speak Cypriot Turkish and one other family speaks a Kurdish variety (Kurmanji) and a Southern Anatolian variety of Turkish, I problematise how the presence of these linguistic varieties shape family language ideologies at both the discursive level and in practice. This, then, opens up questions about how these multilingual, multigenerational Turkish-speaking families construct their family language ideologies, how they reflect on their language repertoires in their discourses and to what extent children of TS families negotiate and influence family language policies within their families with these linguistic varieties.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the socio-cultural and linguistic contexts in which Turkish-speaking families in London navigate their lives. Their experiences, influenced by migration, socio-economic factors, and educational settings. By situating the discussion of Turkish-speaking families within this context, we gain insights into how children's agency manifests in navigating multilingual environments, negotiating language choices, and resisting or complying with family and societal expectations. The focus on the specific challenges and opportunities these families face, particularly in London, underscores the importance of considering external and internal influences when analysing children's agentive roles in FLP. FLP research can benefit from a closer examination of how agency is realised in children's linguistic practices. As Macalister and Mirvahedi (2017) argue, the dynamics of child agency must be understood in relation to the broader socio-political and economic systems that shape family life. In Turkish-speaking families in London, these dynamics are particularly salient, given the community's historical experiences of migration, marginalisation, and cultural preservation. Thus, this contextual background provides an essential foundation for understanding how children participants in this study interact with, influence, and

sometimes reshape their family's language policies, reflecting broader sociolinguistic processes at play during my fieldwork.

In the following section, I review the theoretical framework that underpins this study alongside clarifying the key terms such as what I mean by 'family', 'agency', 'language' and 'identity'. I first give an overview of family language policy and child agency in FLP research, covering the recent scholarship. Subsequently, I provide an overview of identity and home language research.



# **Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework**

## **3.1 Introduction**

The objective of this chapter is to thoroughly explore the central theoretical aspects included in this study. Primarily, the focus of this chapter centres on the conceptualisation of child agency within the context of Family Language Policy (FLP). This exploration is facilitated by the overview of the foundations and development of research in family language policy, analysing the internal and external factors influencing FLP, and elucidating the positioning of the term ‘family’ within the sphere of family language policy research.

This chapter provides an extensive discussion of the agentic turn of child agency within FLP research as a burgeoning subject, highlighting how the concept has become central to understanding children’s roles in language practices within family contexts. By integrating insights from Childhood Studies, this chapter underscores the relational and socially constructed dimensions of child agency, offering a nuanced perspective that enriches FLP research. Furthermore, this chapter introduces modified version of a model designed by Smith-Christmas (2020) to facilitate the analysis of the different dimensions of child agency. Given that this thesis adopts a post-structuralist perspective on language(s) and identity, a dedicated section within this chapter is allocated to a thorough discussion of these concepts. By engaging with these notions, this section aims to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

## **3.2 Family Language Policy**

In recent sociolinguistic research, the family has become a prominent topic of study, particularly due to the impact of globalisation on family multilingualism (Curdt-Christiansen & Sun, 2022). The increased mobility of people, along with the proliferation of digital communication technologies, has made it easier for families to maintain connections with people and cultures across borders. The field of ‘Family Language Policy’ has received increasing attention in response to this change in social life. Although Luykx (2003) was the first one who introduced the term in her study with bilingual

Aymara families investigating family language policy and gender socialisation, the term gained wider use in the field with the seminal study of K. A. King et al. (2008) as they made effort to delimit Family Language Policy (henceforth FLP) research as a field.

The field of family language policy (FLP), which initially developing from research on language policy, integrates knowledge from studies on child language acquisition, language socialisation, and language maintenance and shift. Underlying the development of FLP field is the fundamental questions of why some children, who grow up in bi/multilingual environment become bi/multilingual, while others end up being monolingual; why some transnational families maintain their minority/ heritage languages while others do not; what decisions made by caregivers regarding language use and practice at home; and whether they encourage or discourage the use of specific languages. The interaction between these decisions and practices with broader language ideologies and educational policies is also examined (Curdts-Christiansen & Sun, 2022). Moving beyond the traditional focus on individual language acquisition and to examine the role that families play in promoting multilingualism and language maintenance, researchers have been interested in understanding the complex social and cultural factors that influence families' language practices and the ways in which these practices can shape linguistic and cultural identities over time.

Research on family language policy frequently utilises Fishman's Reversing Language Shift Model (Fishman, 1991) as it primarily investigated how families strive to uphold an ethnic minority language both within their households and in the larger community (Schwartz & Verschik, 2013). According to De Houwer (2007), bilingual children usually acquire the majority language effortlessly, but learning the heritage language can be a considerable obstacle without additional efforts. The core of maintaining and transmitting languages hinges on the interaction between the primary caregiver and the child (Fishman 1991), predominantly taking place within the family setting. As a result, Fishman's model is crucial and extensively employed in studies related to family language policy.

The focus of family language policy studies is to understand how children learn and use language and how it is shaped by the attitudes and beliefs of parents towards language, as well as the strategies they employ to promote language learning and use within the family. K. A. King et al. (2008) indicated that FLP draws from and contributes to two

distinct disciplines, namely the studies of child language acquisition and language policy. Earlier studies worked closely with child language acquisition field and highlighted the necessity of evaluating how language ideologies of caregivers influence the linguistic practices that impacted on the language development of children at home (i.e., one-parent-one-language policy). That has been said, many households do not have explicit parental strategies or arrangements for language use within the family (Fogle & King, 2013; Gafaranga, 2010). Hence, recent research involves the ‘covert and implicit’ language policies as well as ‘explicit and overt’ planning. Therefore, family language policy was initially defined as “explicit and overt planning among the members in a family network in relation to their language use” (K. A. King et al., 2008, p. 907), and, then this definition extended to include implicit and covert planning, as well as literacy practices (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; King & Fogle, 2013; Spolsky, 2012). Inspired by the tripartite model of language policy (Spolsky, 2004), family language policy focuses on language ideologies, language practices and language maintenance in the family. These are as follows:

a) *Language ideologies (language beliefs)* refer to the beliefs, attitudes, and values that people hold about the use of minority and dominant languages in the home context among the family members and its use. Within the context of FLP, language ideology can play a role shaping the family’s language practices and policy, as it influences their perceptions of the value and importance of different languages and the ways in which they should be used.

b) *Language practices (language ecologies)* refer to the actual use of language within a given context, including the ways in which speakers use and manipulate language to accomplish different communicative goals. Language practise involves the specific ways in which family members use different language resources within the household, such as the domains of language use, types of language activities, and language choice.

c) *Language management (language maintenance/planning)* refers to the strategies and practices that are used to promote the continued use and development of languages over time. Within the FLP context, language maintenance involves the ways in which the family supports the development and use of their chosen language(s). That is the

deliberate efforts to influence language practices and maintain the home languages (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013a; K. A. King et al., 2008; Schwartz, 2010; Shohamy, 2006).

According to Spolsky's model, these three components interact with each other to shape the overall language policy. The model highlights the complex and dynamic nature of language policy, which is influenced by a wide range of factors at different level. In their recent study Curdt-Christiansen and Sun (2022) argued that language policy research has mainly focused on language planning and management at macro level, such as within the state and educational institutions. Yet, there is a need to understand how language choices are made at meso (family), or at the micro (individual) level. This study addresses this gap by exploring how language policies are negotiated and enacted within families, specifically examining the role of child agency in shaping family language practices. Furthermore, Curdt-Christiansen and Huang (2020) pointed out that the surrounding linguistic and cultural environments play a crucial role on family multilingualism, as they influence the ideologies, practices, and maintenance of families. Decisions and practices regarding FLP are influenced by factors such as language ideologies, the availability of intergenerational speech resources, parents' educational background, their own language learning experiences, migration history, and the family's economic resources. Curdt-Christiansen (2014, 2018) formulated a model of FLP with two major types of factors that depicts the interplay between FLP and its sociocultural, political, and linguistic context.

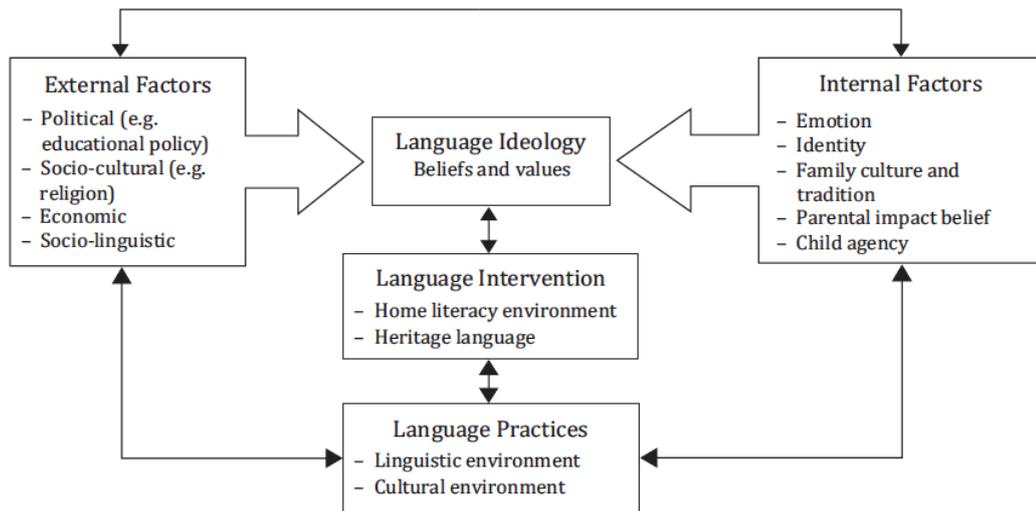
### **3.2.1 Internal and external factors influencing FLP**

Curdt-Christiansen and Huang (2020) proposed a dynamic FLP model of these factors showing how internal and external forces interact to influence the formation of FLP.

This model offers insights into the interplay between family decisions and broader sociocultural contexts. While this framework is essential to understanding the complexity of FLP, my study concentrates on child agency within FLP, providing an additional perspective on how children actively participate in and shape family language practices.

Schwartz (2010) pointed out that the efforts for language management might depend on external forces which are the supports of a sociolinguistic environment or internal factors which are the controls of the home language environment. External factors (e.g. the political and socio-cultural environment) and internal factors (e.g. the home literacy

environment, parents' expectations and knowledge of bilingualism) are multifaceted and intersectional driving forces in shaping FLP (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009)



**Figure 3.** Dynamic model of family language policy (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020, p. 176)

External factors have a significant impact on FLP as the family environment is profoundly affected by the broader sociolinguistic and socio-cultural values, beliefs and practices. In her research with Chinese families in Singapore, Curdt-Christiansen (2014) illustrated that FLP is shaped by the national policy as this policy values English at the educational and socio-political levels. Thus, Chinese parents were also inclined to accept the dominance of English in their families. Similarly, Lane et al. (2010) investigated the Kven, Meankieli and Sami languages in North Calotte, in the Arctic, with respect to the revitalisation of these minority languages at a macro level and found that the lack of implementation of national language policy and also prejudice and neglect from the majority language speakers resulted in having few opportunities for the speakers of these languages in terms of language maintenance. Luykx (2005) also explored how Quechua-speaking minority children in Bolivia faced school pressure for using only Spanish and this pressure resulted in adaptations to Spanish in their FLP. These studies demonstrate that the decisions about familial language policies are not made in a vacuum as there are factors affecting the decision-making process of the families such as the prestige of the

language, the economic and educational value of the language and the national language policies.

Micro dynamics within families also influence the FLP. It is frequently being observed in the studies that micro factors such as parents' perceptions and practices play an important role on children's attitudes towards the minority language as well as their bilingual development (Curdt-Christiansen, 2014; De Houwer, 2007; King & Fogle, 2006; Spolsky, 2012). For instance, in their longitudinal qualitative case studies, Conteh et al. (2013) examined the level of bilingual teachers' understanding and recognition of families' language, cultural, and educational values and behaviours. This investigation focused on observing and analysing the interactions among teachers, families, and children within complementary school classes situated in the United Kingdom. They used the term 'funds of knowledge' (see González, Moll, & Amanti, 2006) which refers to the family and community practices and resources that have an impact on children's bilingual identity and language beliefs. It encompasses the knowledge, skills, and cultural practices that individuals acquire through their everyday experiences within their families, communities, and cultural backgrounds. By emphasising the importance of the ecology of learning, they argued that the decision-making processes are not only affected by our own experiences but also by those of our environment with the families, communities and even across the generations.

The studies mentioned above have shed light on the connection between children's bilingual development and language policy in the family setting, school achievement and FLP relationships. Overall, the aim of FLP studies is to provide insights into the ways in which families can effectively support multilingualism and to inform policies and practices that promote linguistic and cultural diversity within and beyond the home. In this section I reviewed the literature on FLP, highlighting the multifaceted elements that influence family language policies.

In the following, I review the foundations and historical development in FLP literature.

### **3.2.2 Foundations and Historical Development of FLP**

The historical development of the field of FLP is summarised by (King, 2016), situating it within a rich lineage of research traditions in four phases. These are as follows:

1. Earlier work formed by classic diary studies of linguist parents,
2. Research on bilingual language acquisition addressing the central psycholinguistic questions,
3. Research focusing on a more sociolinguistic approach, and a turn to a more diverse range of family types, languages, and contexts,
4. Research focusing on globally dispersed, transnational, multilingual populations, and ever-greater heterogeneity and adaptability in research methods.

Currently, phases 3 and 4 are currently underway, reflecting researchers' growing recognition and interest in addressing the limitations observed in earlier FLP studies. My research is situated within these phases, as it aims to address the complexities of multilingualism in diverse family contexts and to explore the dynamic nature of language practices among transnational families.

The *initial* phase of FLP focused on classic diary studies where the authors investigated their own children's language use and development to understand how bilingual children acquire their first language and early second language in a home environment. The very first documented study of FLP in a bilingual family was conducted by Ronjat (1913) who provided a detailed account of his son Louis' bilingual acquisition of French and German from birth to age 4;10 in France. He was advised by linguist Maurice Grammont to use the 'One person-One language (OPOL)' method which he mentioned about this method in his book of *Observations sur le langage des enfants (Observation on Children's Language)* in 1902. OPOL means that each parent speaks only their native language when addressing their child. Ronjat reported that his child Louis achieved proficiency in both languages and kept them separately. In other diary study, Leopold documented in his longitudinal research (1939-1949) that he implemented OPOL method with his own daughter, Hildegard, who was raised in the United States by a German-speaking father and an English-speaking mother. Similar to Ronjat, Leopold also reported success using the OPOL strategy. However, as Hildegard grew older, she became less willing to use German in her life dominated by American culture. Additionally, Hildegard's younger sister did not achieve the same level of fluency in German that Hildegard had attained in her early years. Leopold argued that the young child who was exposed to the two

languages from birth did not learn bilingually but instead fused them together as one unified system.

After almost a four decades of silence, child language development studies showed interest in family language policy from the point of psycholinguistics. During the *second* phase, FLP research merged with studies on bilingual language acquisition to address psycholinguistic inquiries such as the differences in language development trajectories of bilingual and monolingual children, the nature of linguistic transfer (King, 2016), and parental discourse strategies effecting child bilingualism. The focus of research has shifted to the language-internal and specific cognitive mechanisms involved in bi- and multilingual acquisition of children in development psycholinguistics (Lanza & Gomes, 2020). Employing language socialisation (cf. Duranti et al., 2014) as the theoretical framework, Lanza's seminal research (1992, 1997, 2004) took a sociolinguistic and discourse analytic approach for investigating the psycholinguistic question whether language differentiation occurs before the age of three. Lanza's (1997) research involved a close examination of how English-Norwegian parents and children interacted with each other and showed that the mixing of languages in children under three years of age is influenced by the context in which they are exposed to different languages. Furthermore, her work illustrated how parental strategies play a key role in shaping the bilingual outcomes of even very young children and demonstrated that two-year-olds are capable of code-switching. Lanza's analysis which takes a perspective of child language socialization considered language acquisition as a process that is integrated with the child's developing comprehension of culturally acceptable norms. This perspective involves "an understanding of *who* uses a particular language, to *whom* it should be used, *where* it should be used, and also whether or not it is appropriate to *mix* the two languages" (Smith-Christmas, 2016, p. 5). Lanza indicated that how parents respond to their child's language mixing is crucial in determining whether a bilingual or monolingual context is established. According to Lanza (1997, p. 262), there are five types of discourse strategies that the caregivers employ when their children use an inappropriate code during the interaction. As listed below, those strategies follow an order from the most monolingually oriented (Minimal Grasp) to less monolingually oriented (Code-switching) one.

*Minimal Grasp Strategy*: This involves the caregiver responding to the child with a minimal acknowledgment or no response at all, indicating explicitly that the child's code

use is not understood or accepted in that context. This approach reinforces monolingual language use which is a deliberate decision Lanza suggests as this is found useful in other studies (e.g. Taeschner, 2012).

*Expressed Guess Strategy:* This involves the caregiver attempting to understand the child's code use (child speaks in Language B) and responding with a guess in the appropriate language (the parent reformulates what the child has said in Language A), indicating that the child's code use was not appropriate in that context. This approach allows the child to repair his/her utterance by using the appropriate language code.

*Repetition Strategy:* The caregiver in this strategy, repeats the child's utterance in the appropriate code, modelling the appropriate language use and indicating that the child's code use is not appropriate. This strategy relatively covert in marking the child's utterance as faultable since there is no request for response from the child in appropriate code.

*Move on Strategy:* This strategy involves the caregiver ignores the child's code use (Language B) and moves on to the topic at hand without implicitly requesting the child to use Language A. Gafaranga (2010) named move on strategy as 'parallel mode' in his study.

*Code-Switching Strategy:* The caregiver uses a combination of two languages by either incorporating the child's Language B utterance into the caregiver's Language A sentence (intra-sentential code-switching), or by switching to Language B in the caregiver's next sentence (inter-sentential code-switching). This approach encourages bilingual language use and maintains the conversation.

Although Lanza (1997) uses the term code-switching to describe the caregiver's strategic use of multiple languages in interactions with children, I conceptualise this phenomenon as translanguaging within a linguistic repertoire framework. Code-switching traditionally assumes a shift between distinct, separate language systems, reinforcing the notion that bilinguals operate with two monolingual competencies. However, translanguaging challenges this perspective by emphasising that bilingual speakers draw from an integrated linguistic, cognitive, and cultural repertoire, rather than switching between two fixed codes (Li Wei, 2018). Within my study, children and caregivers are not merely alternating between separate linguistic systems but are dynamically and fluidly using their full linguistic resources to negotiate meaning, construct identities, and engage in

interactional practices. This shift in perspective aligns with a post-structuralist view of language, acknowledging the fluid and interconnected nature of multilingual communication, rather than treating languages as bounded entities. By adopting a translanguaging lens, I move beyond a structural analysis of bilingual interactions and instead highlight the agentive, flexible, and socially embedded nature of multilingual family language practices.

Much of the early research in the second phase also examined the role of linguistic input. For instance, the study of a bilingual Dutch-English child by De Houwer (1990) demonstrated the role of language input is vital for achieving balanced child bilingualism. However, the increasing interest in linguistic input in bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) has shifted towards to the discussions around the quality and quantity of linguistic input in terms of child language development. Snow (2014) argued that quality and quantity of language input have widely been accepted as relevant when it comes to the language development of children. Currently, the focus is on the variation in input and its effect on language acquisition, with attention to factors such as the variety of speakers and types of activities for which the language is used. Studies have identified that the more children exposed to the minority language, the more they become productive in using both languages than those who receive less input in their minority\home\heritage languages (De Houwer, 2007; Quiroz et al., 2010). The caregivers who speak the minority language play important roles on the input that children receive. For instance, Lyon (1996) conducted a longitudinal study on the language development of preschool Welsh-English bilingual children and argued that the mother's language use with the child was found to be the most significant predictor of the child's language development. Similarly, Varro (1998) looked at the language practices of French-American children and emphasised the importance of maternal input for child bilingualism. Receiving language input includes not only parents but also siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and other extended family members. This wider circle of family members can be a significant factor in determining the amount of exposure a child has to the minority language spoken in the home (Bayley et al., 1996; Kopeliovich, 2013; Melo-Pfeifer, 2015; Ruby, 2012). Sibling factor is another element in terms of the quality of input a child receives in the minority language. Initially, it has been considered that older siblings receive a greater amount of minority language exposure compared to their younger siblings, leading them to a higher level of proficiency

in the minority language (Döpke, 1992). However, Schwartz (2010) pointed out that not all multilingual families experience this. Kopeliovich (2013), for instance, conducted a longitudinal study with her own four Russian-Hebrew bilingual children regarding their language development. The oldest child grew up in a Russian-speaking environment in Israel, with both parents and grandparents speaking Russian at home. However, the situation changed when the second and third children were born, as the eldest began using Hebrew at home and passed it on to their siblings. This pattern was reversed with the birth of the fourth child, as the older siblings spoke Russian to the child, resulting in increased exposure for the youngest to the minority language. The different results of older siblings on the language development of younger siblings highlight how contextual factors play a dynamic role in determining the overall language input children receive.

Hence the approaches in the second phase have increased the interest and awareness about the role of family members as well as the different settings where bilingual children are exposed to language, including home, childcare, and education, have a significant impact on their language development.

The *third* phase of FLP research was a turn for the establishment of FLP as a field of inquiry. During this phase of research, FLP started to emerge as a developing field of investigation, guided by Spolsky's language policy framework, which consists of three interconnected elements: language ideology, language practice, and language management (Spolsky, 2004). It was during this phase that the field of family language policy was formally defined as explicit (Shohamy, 2006) and overt (Schiffman, 1996) planning regarding language use within the home among family members. This perspective allowed scholars for examination of parental language ideologies, which reflect broader societal attitudes and beliefs about language(s) and child-caretaker interactions, ultimately influencing bilingual child language development. The researchers focused on the question that how parental language ideologies and child-parent interactions affect children's language outcomes (see for example De Houwer, 1999; K. A. King et al., 2008; Lanza, 2007).

Apart from that, both 'language socialisation' (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011), and 'language maintenance and shift' (Fishman, 1991) research contributed to the study of family language policy in this third phase (e.g., Caldas & Caron-Caldas, 2000; Curdt-

Christiansen, 2013a; Gafaranga, 2010). For instance, a survey study by Tuominen (1999) investigated parental language practices of multilingual families in Australia. The study revealed that even though parents' education level and socioeconomic status were associated with the use of the minority language in the home, children often had the most influence in determining the language spoken at home, leading to a shift towards the majority language. Okita (2002), in turn, conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with the Japanese mothers in Japanese-British bilingual families. The findings revealed that the primary responsibility for bilingual child-rearing is typically attributed to mothers and raising bilingual children is emotionally demanding work which often goes unrecognised and invisible both in the family and the outer society. Okita provided us with how cultural ideologies can be related to child-rearing practices in the interactional process of language socialisation. During this phase, researchers adopted interdisciplinary methodologies to investigate these inquiries. They employed diverse techniques, including parental interviews, qualitative observations, and the collection of naturalistic data through audio and video recordings in various settings, both at home and beyond. These approaches started to provide us with a more comprehensive understanding of how parental language ideologies shape the implementation, realization, and negotiation of family language policies over time.

Research on family language policy has significantly contributed the understanding of how parents make decisions about language use in the home and how these decisions affect children's language development in the third phase. Having said that, the development in the field showed us that previous research has focused primarily on heterosexual, two-parent, middle-class families. Scholars in the third phase studied family language policy in non-traditional family structures (e.g., single-parent, LGBT, adoptive families, families living with grandparents) and in minority language settings in transnational as well as diasporic contexts. For instance, Fogle (2012) studied language socialisation in adoptive families, Ruby (2012) investigated the co-located grandparents in Bengali-British households, Vorobeva (2022) examined the language policy of two single-parent families in Finland, and Zhu and Kozminska (2022) looked at language ideologies and practices of one multilingual, self-identified LGBTQ+ family.

Aligning with advancements in applied linguistics, there has been an increase in the recognition of family as a dynamic, multi-layered, complex system over time and space.

That is, researchers have been taken into account the complex interplay of factors that influence family language policy, such as child agency and identity construction. These aspects have been widely emphasised by researchers (cf. Gafaranga, 2010; King & Fogle, 2013; Smith-Christmas, 2016). I return and review the studies conducted on child agency in a separate section in detail.

FLP researchers in the *fourth* phase have moved their direction into a more diverse context on globally dispersed, transnational, multilingual populations, and ever-greater heterogeneity and adaptability in research methods (King, 2016; Lanza & Gomes, 2020). During this phase, being multilingual is not merely regarded as an outcome, but rather as a defining aspect through which adults and children shape their identities, lifestyles, and families. The studies focused these subjects asked: How FLP is negotiated and constructed in family members' interactions and identity developments (see for example, King & Lanza, 2019; Lanza & Wei, 2016)? And what are the ways in which families understand and navigate multilingualism throughout generations, and how does language intertwine with family dynamics (Hua & Wei, 2016)? There is a clear highlight on the families constructed through multilingual practices which led FLP studies to broaden its perspective by studying other factors affecting family decisions, such as religion, education, sociocultural and political views, emotions, and geographical locations that creates linguistic space. Even though there is an increasing attention to FLP research in Western communities, Smith-Christmas (2017) criticised the lack of research in Africa and Middle East except Israel. Following her, Lanza and Gomes (2020) illustrated the number of FLP publications by country indicating that most of the studies examined FLP in Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic [WEIRD (Henrich et al., 2010)] countries. Lanza and Gomes argued that low status languages of economically marginalised societies, indigenous and endangered language communities, diasporas in WEIRD locations have been overlooked. Lomeu Gomes (2018) suggested adopting a decolonial perspective when examining family multilingualism to push the boundaries of theoretical exploration in FLP that are primarily centred around Western perspectives and canonical epistemologies. Therefore, he argued that the investigation of multilingual families should encompass perspectives and experiences from the global South, rather than solely focusing on those of the global North to accurately depict the current social landscape of multilingualism.

My study of children's agency within Turkish-speaking families in the UK situates itself within these current debates by exploring how multilingualism is not only a family outcome but also a dynamic process of internal and external factors influencing FLP. By focusing on the agency of children in these families, I aim to shed light on how they negotiate their linguistic and cultural identities in a context that different home languages of participating families. This aligns with the call for greater attention to non-WEIRD contexts and the diverse experiences and shared linguistic repertoires of these multilingual Turkish-speaking intergenerational families. Additionally, my research seeks to highlight how Turkish-speaking families navigate their multilingual realities, considering factors such as migration, identity, and family dynamics as discussed in Chapter 2. This approach not only addresses gaps in existing literature but also contributes to a broader understanding of multilingualism in the UK, emphasising the need for inclusive research methodologies that reflect the complexity and diversity of family language practices.

Through all four phases, FLP research has provided evidence that the family domain plays a significant role for language development of multilingual children. Deeply rooted in society, the family works as the backdrop for the development and preservation of home languages. Discussions surrounding transnational, multilingual families have the potential to significantly influence the transmission or discouragement of home languages. The increasing interest in FLP field over the last decade reflects the intricacies of modern families and the dynamic nature of language maintenance and development within homes, as evidenced by the implementation of family language policies and practices. As King (2016) highlighted, the fourth phase of the development of FLP shows that there is a greater diversity in family types and languages. In parallel with this, there is a greater variety of research methods being employed. In the following section, I discuss the concept of family in multilingual research.

### **3.2.3 Conceptualising Family within FLP field**

Research on language policies and practices within family unit requires to address how people perceive the concept of 'family'. Family is the primary site where members of the family negotiate and contribute to the language ideologies and practices. As Curdt-Christiansen (2018) reminds us, "making decisions on what language(s) to practice and

encourage or to discourage or abandon depends largely on the values that family members ascribe to certain languages” (p. 3). Similarly, Spolsky (2012) describes the family as the critical domain of language policy and Schwartz (2010) highlights that one of the significant domains of language policy is the families because of their crucial roles in forming the child’s linguistic environment. While the attention has been given to the concept of family, Lanza and Gomes (2020) and Palviainen (2020) emphasise that there is a need for the researchers addressing what is meant by the family in a particular study.

Today, in our highly interconnected world, this question remains controversial. In the context of globalisation, speech communities around the world are influenced by various factors such as increased mobility, immigration, and transnational marriages. Therefore, ‘family’ does not necessarily require residing together or participating in shared activities. It refers to specific social connections based on kinship and life-cycle relationships, such as the connections of siblings, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, and uncles. For instance, Said (2021) shows that the grandmother who is distantly located became a part of daily interactions and socialisation using Skype as evident in mealtime scenes. These instances effectively illustrate the concept of family as a negotiated space that does not rely on residing together. The development of communication technologies has transcended temporal and spatial boundaries, shaping the dynamics of multilingual families. Thus, we have witnessed some new family forms and diverse family types over the last two decades as discussed in section [3<sup>rd</sup> phase of development of FLP].

Although many studies on family language policy have focused on Western nuclear families that adhere to heteronormative norms, comprising two parents and biologically related children, these diverse family constellations challenge the conventional definitions and highlight the intricate nature of family connections.

Over the past decade, there has been significant evolution and development in the field of language studies within the family context. This progress has resulted in a better understanding of how language not only influences the language development of children but also plays a role in shaping the identity of the entire family, including both adults and children. The emergence of Family Language Policy as a prominent area of study has catalysed sociolinguistic research into language policies and practices within multilingual transnational families, serving as a driving force for further exploration in this field.

Traditionally, family has been regarded as a private domain in Fishmanian sociolinguistics (Fishman, 1991). According to this approach, the family is seen as a primary context for language socialisation, where language learning and acquisition take place through interactions between family members within the home setting. Therefore, the family is recognised as a crucial factor in understanding language maintenance, language shift, and language policy within a community or society.

Acknowledging the ongoing controversy surrounding the definition of family, Holstein and Gubrium (2013) approached family from a social constructionist perspective, emphasising the significance of understanding the family as an interpretive practice rather than a static unit. This aligns with the shift in the way of sociological understandings of family, moving from traditional viewing the family as a rigid institution governed by moral conventions to recognizing family and personal life as diverse sets of practices. That is, the concept of family is considered complex, including different family types such as transnational, immigrant as well as intercultural marriages ranging from nuclear, recently established to multigenerational families. Therefore, every family possesses its own distinct characteristics, making it worthy of careful examination and consideration within the realm of FLP research. As Van Mensel (2018) pointed out, families create their own sense of identity and define what constitutes family through various means, with language playing a vital role in this process.

Understanding the family as negotiated/constituted through set of practices in society rather than as a fixed unit has also become prominent in FLP field in the last decade (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020). It has been emphasised that language practices within the family are influenced by cultural beliefs, values, and norms, shaping the linguistic repertoire of individuals within the family unit. Fishman's definition of family as a private domain has been contradicted in Lanza (2021, p. 765) who notes that "The very dynamic and complex nature of 'stretched' families brings in the necessity to envisage the family as a space, social in nature, as opposed to a domain". Family, in this sense, is seen as a flexible space where meaning and relationships are shaped through the use of different languages and communication resources, forming a multilingual repertoire.

Following this line, I also view the family as a dynamic space which is fluid, evolving and open for change over time and space. This view of the family as a dynamic space allows the researcher to re-consider traditional and fixed positions of parent-children interaction. In the recent studies (Fogle & King, 2013; Gafaranga, 2010; Luykx, 2005; Revis, 2016) researchers illustrated that parent-child interaction is not a unidirectional interaction regarding family language policy and practices, it is rather multidirectional where children's agentive roles also take place.

Many of the early years of FLP studies focused mainly on parental language ideologies, and decisions that shaped language policy, but relatively less attention was given to children's active role in FLP (but see Fogle & King, 2013; Gafaranga, 2010; Tuominen, 1999). In other words, these studies located children as the objects of language socialisation, rather than its agents (Luykx, 2005). More recent studies, however, investigate language as a key element in which multilingual family members define themselves and their families with and go beyond the traditional view of the nuclear family (e.g. families living with grandparents (Ruby, 2015)).

Although the notion that children influence and shape family language policies and practices is addressed in the studies mentioned above, Fogle and King (2013, p. 3) noted that "few studies have attempted to identify how this is accomplished through close analysis of everyday conversations". Since children's agency in language choice has been overlooked, the rationale for this study is to contribute to the field of family language policy by investigating the agentive role of children in home language policy and interactional practices.

In the following section, I draw on the concept of child agency and how this concept became essential in childhood studies and eventually in family language policy research.

### **3.3 Child agency**

In this section, I first review the foundations of agency discussions which are mainly based on the dichotomy between structure and agency by Bourdieu and Giddens. Then, the discussions move forward to agency research in Childhood studies and language-agency related subjects, and eventually to child agency in family language policy research.

In FLP research, child agency has become an increasingly prominent focus, especially in the past decade, with a growing body of work dedicated to this area (Bergroth & Palviainen, 2017; Bollig & Kelle, 2016; Fogle & King, 2013; Gyogi, 2015; Kheirkhah, 2016; Kheirkhah & Cekaite, 2018; Knoll & Becker, 2023; Revis, 2016; Said & Zhu, 2019; Smith-Christmas, 2020, 2022b; Smith-Christmas, 2021). However, despite this rising interest, insights from childhood studies, which examine agency within the context of children's social and developmental environments, remain underexplored. My research builds on Smith-Christmas's (2021) work, which advocates for linking childhood studies with FLP to better understand how agency operates in children's daily family interactions.

By incorporating perspectives from childhood studies, I aim to advance the conceptualisation of child agency in FLP, moving beyond the prevalent assumption that 'children have agency' to explore how agency specifically unfolds within children's language practices. My approach critically examines the discourse on child agency across both childhood studies and FLP research, thereby contributing to a more integrated framework for understanding agency in family language policies and linguistic practices.

### **3.3.1 Defining Agency**

Human agency has emerged as a commonly used and prominent concept in numerous studies within the social sciences. The greater part of the literature on agency is concerned with the dichotomy between agency and social structure specifically after Bourdieu's (1977) and Giddens' (1984) works in 1980's and 1990's.

In the context of Bourdieu's epistemology, structure and agency are two interconnected and interdependent concepts that shape social life. Structure refers to the social, cultural, and institutional arrangements that exist in a given society, while agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act and make choices within the constraints and possibilities set by the structure. Bourdieu's understanding of the relationship between structure and agency is rooted in his concept of habitus. *Habitus*, as defined by Bourdieu (1977), is a system of durable and transposable dispositions acquired through socialisation and shaped by an individual's social position and experiences. Bourdieu emphasises that agency is not solely an individual attribute but emerges through social interactions and relations. Structures provide the conditions and constraints within which individuals act, while agency refers to individuals' capacity to navigate and exert influence within those

structures. The habitus, shaped by structures, both limits and enables individual agency. While individuals are not completely free from structural determinations, they can exercise agency to varying degrees by strategically engaging with and challenging social structures.

Aside from Bourdieu, Giddens (1979) attempts to understand the relation between structure and agency and provides sociological structuration theory which contends that agency and structure both contribute to one another and that both are the two sides of the same coin. Giddens (1979) introduces the concept that highlights how agency is intricately linked to reflective self-awareness and rational decision-making. This understanding of agency involves a process in which individuals actively assess and contemplate their actions, choices, and intentions in social context. Within this framework, individuals possess the capacity to make deliberate decisions that can either involve refraining from taking action or intentionally deviating from societal expectations and established norms. Central to Giddens' notion of agency is the idea that individuals must possess an awareness of the prevailing cultural norms, ideologies, and expectations that shape their environment. This awareness empowers individuals to navigate their choices within the broader social context. By acknowledging and comprehending the norms and ideologies that influence their lives, individuals are better equipped to make meaningful decisions that align with their intentions and values. According to Giddens, individuals draw upon their knowledge of the existing structures and norms to act, but their actions also have the potential to reproduce or transform those structures. Thus, every action is both a reproduction of existing structures and a potential source of change.

Giddens' concept of agency is considered equally applicable when examining the agency of children. Just as adults are influenced by societal norms and ideologies, children also engage with and respond to the cultural expectations surrounding them. Children's agency involves a process of reflection and consideration, even if their level of understanding and awareness might differ from that of adults (Bollig & Kelle, 2016). As children grow and develop, they progressively gain insights into the norms and expectations of their environment. This awareness becomes a foundation for their capacity to actively participate in their own lives and make choices that align with their emerging preferences and understanding. Giddens explains how structure and agency complement each other seems to be an essential component in any sociology of childhood: "Every act which

contributes to the reproduction of a structure is also an act of production, and as such may initiate change by altering the structure at the same time as it reproduces it” (Giddens, 1979; quoted in Oswell, 2013, p. 44).

While both Bourdieu and Giddens have made substantial contributions to understanding social structures, inequalities, and the interplay between individual and societal factors, their theories have been criticised for not adequately addressing how individuals can transform or challenge the very structures that shape their behaviours (Oswell, 2013; Saxena & Martin-Jones, 2013).

In the following, I address the foundations of child agency in Childhood studies.

### **3.3.2 Child Agency in Childhood Studies**

The concept of child agency began to emerge as a significant topic of research and discussion in the latter half of the twentieth century. Several key factors and events contributed to its development within the research field. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), (UNCRC), played a crucial role in promoting the idea of children as active agents with rights. In the 1960s and 1970s, broader cultural shifts toward individual rights, civil rights, and women’s liberation changed the way for a more progressive perspective on children’s rights and agency. The field of childhood studies began to take shape around the 1980s as scholars from various disciplines, including sociology, linguistic, anthropology, and education, started to critically examine childhood and children’s experiences. Child agency, then, gained prominence in childhood studies, sociology, psychology, and education as researchers and practitioners came to recognise the importance of understanding and valuing children’s voices and experiences. The recognition of children as active participants in their lives, possess their own viewpoints, and make meaningful choices has led to changes in policies and practices that involve children, such as involving them in decision-making processes related to education, healthcare, and family matters. It also promotes such environment that support children’s autonomy, participation, and overall well-being.

Oswell (2013) argues that the notion of childhood as we understand today is a relatively recent ‘invention’ shaped by historical, societal, and cultural transformations that unfolded over time. The rise of social constructionistic views (i.e., the works of Ariès) challenged traditional notions of childhood and encouraged researchers to view childhood

as a social construct. This perspective highlighted the importance of examining how childhood is understood and experienced in different cultural and historical contexts, leading to greater recognition of children's agency. Aries (1962) argues that the modern conceptualisation of childhood, characterised by the recognition of childhood as a distinct life phase separate from adulthood, takes root only from the 13th century onwards. There is also a shift away from the historically dominant belief that children are simply objects of care and control, and instead focuses on their unique perspectives, contributions, and rights. In the present time, for instance, children's voices within the family carry significance due to historical alignments of various forces, including political, social, cultural, and economic factors (Oswell, 2013). Since the late 19th century, families and households have been regarded as settings where children's agency develops. Initially perceived as closely connected spaces for children's passive socialisation, these units are now acknowledged as significant arenas for the advancement of democracy.

The concept of child agency gradually emerged as a result of evolving social attitudes, legal frameworks, and critical perspectives. Valentine (2011), for example, pointed out the lack of theoretical conceptualisation regarding child agency. Contrary to perceiving child agency as the enactment of free choice or self-directed action, she highlighted that agency is intertwined with power dynamics and shaped by societal influences which holds the capacity to construct and shape the very social structures it operates within. What is more, Valentine distinguished that agency goes beyond mere competence or capability.

The recognition of children's agency involves acknowledging their active engagement and decision-making abilities, which might not inherently translate to the family and broader societal recognition of their full rights and participation. In other words, demonstrating that children enact agency does not automatically equate to establishing their entitlement to increased participation or rights.

However, children are no longer relegated to invisibility (Oswell, 2013). They now come forth as integral members of families, actively involved in navigating their own family dynamics and connections. They transcend being mere members of families; as self-aware actors in their own lives, they contribute to the shaping of family structures. This is specifically evident in present digitally driven era. Notably, the influence of children and adolescents on family dynamics is exemplified through their engagement with social

media platforms, texting, and other technological resources (Miller, 2011). These interactions redefine their roles, relationships, and means of self-expression, both within and extending beyond the familial sphere.

Another critique about the lack of theoretical framework on child agency in childhood studies context is the 'interdependence'. Taft (2015) suggests that instead of solely aiming to increase children's autonomy separate from adults, it is essential to establish an environment that enables children to engage in agency alongside adults, fostering participation. A more productive avenue of exploration involves studying the actions and engagements of children within societal settings rather than only focusing on the actor. A relational approach to children's agency is crucial, acknowledging the distinct roles and positions of both children and adults, as well as their interconnectedness (Punch, 2002). Therefore, the methodologies in a study which investigates child agency should give a consideration to gain a relational approach.

A further point of criticism raised in child agency research is moving beyond reading children's agency as resistance or resourcefulness. Abebe (2019) suggests that investigating the contradictory aspects of child agency in their everyday life with social relationships and structures contributes the discussions better than limiting agency with resistance-compliance dichotomy.

Child agency emerges from social contexts and is shaped through interactions with other generations. Intergenerational interactions and the social institutions that create these relationships are the settings in which any practise of agency takes place (Esser et al., 2016). Theoretical concept known as 'generational ordering' (Alanen, 2009) refers to the continual social construction of the interconnected categories of children and adults, facilitating an examination of the discourses and practices through which distinct positions, forms of authority, responsibilities, and resource access are allocated across generations. Oswell (2013, p. 80) states that:

For Alanen (2009, p. 10) then, the question of children's agency is fundamentally connected to children's positioning as children and not adults, and such a positioning implies a relation of power between the two: 'being a child (or an adult does "make a huge difference (or differences) in terms of one's activities, opportunities, experiences and identities". There is clearly a question concerning

the role of children's agency in contesting one's positioning within such a relational process of generationing.

This means that children's agency is constrained within the boundaries set by the generational order, allowing them to exercise agency within the confines of their child status. Generational ordering's discourses and practices establish the framework within which children exercise their agency, shaped and constrained by this very ordering. Simultaneously, children's actions can either reproduce or reshape the existing generational order (Esser et al., 2016). Children exhibit a combination of dependence and autonomy concurrently, underscoring the importance of studying their ability to act within the particular socio-cultural, political, and economic environments they inhabit.

In alignment with this perspective, I interpret children's agency as shaped by the intersection of the generational ordering, various power dynamics in which authority, control, and influence are distributed between children and adults within the family, and socially constructed roles, at the same time it shapes those dynamics and roles. Since children exist in a paradoxical state of both dependent and independent actors, their agency should be exclusively examined within the specific social, cultural, political, and economic settings surrounding them. Oswell (2013), at this point, suggests two essential aspects should be taken into consideration for theorising child agency: Firstly, the reproduction of certain dynamics driven by social structures, and secondly, children's innate abilities to contemplate, address, and modify their circumstances. The former highlights structural influences, while the latter centres on the exercise of agency itself. This conceptual framework emphasises the relational dynamics within the generational structure, underscoring the ever-evolving and contextual nature of children's agency, firmly rooted in sociocultural context (Esser et al., 2016). I adopt this perspective because it acknowledges the interplay between structure and agency, emphasising the evolving, contextual nature of children's agency within family settings.

In this study, children (aged between 5 and 11) are perceived as active agents, a potential that finds its medium of expression through language(s).

### **3.3.3 Ahearn's Definition of Agency – the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act**

Ahearn is one of the linguistic anthropologists who critically approaches the way that agency has been conceptualised by practice theorists mentioned above. She argued that the concept of agency needs more deeper and theoretical analysis. In her seminal essay, Ahearn (2001) provides a definition of agency: “Agency refers to the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act” (p.112). Every action, both in its production and in its interpretation, is socio-culturally mediated, she states. Informed by Ahearn, I understand child agency as socio-culturally mediated capacity to act within the generational structures discussed previously. While generational ordering frames children’s positions within family dynamics, Ahearn’s definition deepens this understanding by illustrating how children’s capacity to act is not only bound by generational power dynamics but also by the broader socio-cultural contexts that mediate these interactions. This definition highlights the role of societal norms, linguistic behaviour, and cultural expectations in shaping children’s agency, while also acknowledging their potential to challenge and navigate these norms. In other words, while children are socialised into these norms, they also retain the capacity to question and challenge them.

Ahearn (2001) maintains that there are various perspectives on the definition of agency with scholars from different disciplines. For instance, action theorists perceive agency as rooted in free will. In contrast, feminist theorists regard agency as a form of resistance. Foucault’s approach presents agency as largely absent, with limited room for its existence. Practice theory emphasises the centrality of human actions, yet these actions could not be considered without the social structures that create them. Although these discussions contribute to the conceptual definition of human agency, Ahearn (2001) suggests that concentrating on elucidating various forms of agency, “or different ways in which agency is socioculturally mediated in particular times and places” (p. 122) shed even more light on agency discussions. In the context of my study, Ahearn’s approach to agency as socio-culturally mediated is essential for examining how children navigate and influence family language policies within their generational and cultural contexts. By framing agency as variable and context-dependent, Ahearn’s concept allows me to explore how children’s actions in the family setting are shaped by, and in turn shape, the cultural and social structures around them.

A significant portion of agency-related studies explores the degree to which consciousness and intentionality are foundational to agency. Ahearn (2001) expresses

doubt regarding the definition of intentionality and contends that the important influence of socio-cultural elements on individual agency has been neglected. Giddens (1979) indicates that agency encompasses the practice of self-reflective observation and rationalisation of one's actions. That is, agentic capacities of people depend on their awareness of existing norms and ideologies. However, the principles of reflexivity and conscious decision-making that Giddens outlines apply to the "competent member of the society" (Giddens, 1984, p. 26). Given the variations in children's levels of maturity, it is not accurate to assume that all children possess the capacity for fully reflective, rational decision-making (Oswell, 2013). The expression of agency requires a certain degree of cognitive development and an understanding of the social patterns they engage with in daily interactions.

The incorporation of insights from linguistic anthropology has unveiled a close link between agency and discourse. 'What people do and what people say they do' serves as the catalysts for exploring discourse and its profound implications for the exercise of agency.

Linguistic anthropologists perceive language as a collaborative tool that individuals consistently co-create. Within this framework, meanings emerge through the joint efforts of participants during specific social interactions. Consequently, the co-construction of meanings extends to the formation of social reality itself. Ahearn (2001) underscores the active role individuals, including children, play in shaping and delimiting interpretations. This perspective emphasises that interpretations are not merely received passively; instead, they are actively shaped through social mediation and intertextual connections within a defined sphere of discourse.

### **3.3.4. Linguistic Repertoire in Multilingual Families**

In recent decades, the concept of linguistic repertoire has emerged as a fundamental framework for understanding the complex dynamics of language use in diverse sociolinguistic contexts.

The notion of linguistic repertoire traces its origins back to Gumperz's (1964) seminal work on verbal repertoire. In his research, Gumperz (1972) outlines the concept of repertoire as encompassing the entirety of linguistic resources available to particular speech communities (e.g. languages, dialects, speech styles), regardless of grammatical

distinctions. As a flexible ‘arsenal’ of communicative resources, this repertoire enables speakers to choose language forms suited to their communicative intentions and social environments (Gumperz, 1964). At the core of Gumperz’s framework lies the notion that verbal repertoire reflects the social constraints and categories that shape individuals’ language choices and practices within specific speech communities. This perspective emphasises the dynamic interaction between language and social identity, illuminating how language choices are impacted by overarching societal surroundings and constraints (Busch, 2012).

Drawing on Gumperz’s (1964) foundational work, contemporary sociolinguistics has reimagined and broadened the concept of repertoire. In sociolinguistic research, applying the concept of linguistic repertoire involves examining the linguistic resources accessible to individuals and communities and studying how these resources are utilised in various communication situations (Rampton, 2006). This could involve carrying out ethnographic research, examining language biographies, or conducting discourse analyses to reveal the varied repertoires of language users and the social significance attached to their language practices (Busch, 2012; Pennycook, 2010). Scholars vary in their interpretations regarding the notion of the linguistic repertoire, with some positing its centrality within individual speakers and their biographical trajectories, while others suggest it arises from the socio-spatial contexts of interaction.

Busch (2012) is critical of Gumperz’ notion of repertoire for focusing solely on the immediate aspects of social interactions within relatively stable speech communities. To overcome this limitation, she suggests broadening the concept to encompass the historical and biographical factors that influence it. Busch (2017) further demonstrates how linguistic repertoire intertwines social and interactive elements with historical, political, and personal aspects by bringing the concept of lived experience of language. The concept of lived experience of language emphasises how language is experienced between people, highlighting the often-overlooked bodily and emotional aspects of how we perceive and use language (Busch, 2017). Similarly, Blommaert (2009) underscores the importance of considering an individual’s life journey rather than just their place of birth, viewing repertoires as reflective of personal histories within unique sociocultural, historical, and political contexts.

In this study of Turkish-speaking families in the UK, I conceptualise the linguistic repertoire not as a static collection but as a dynamic and evolving set of resources. I align with sociolinguistic perspectives that expand the repertoire concept to capture not only immediate social interactions but also the historical, biographical, and political contexts that shape it.

Busch (2017) argues that we need to rethink the notion of the linguistic repertoire, given that current phenomena such as increased mobility, migration, and participation in transnational networks of communication challenge the idea of relatively stable speech communities. Likewise, Blommaert and Backus (2013) highlight how the concept of repertoire has evolved significantly over the years. The recent waves of migration and the advent of the Internet have introduced extreme levels of diversity, complicating traditional terms like diaspora, minority, and community. The coexistence of older migrant populations with newer ones has created more complex and less predictable social dynamics. Blommaert and Backus (2013) refer to this phenomenon as ‘superdiversity,’ which has diminished the ability to presuppose identities, social and cultural behaviours structures, norms, and expectations. Busch and Blommaert’s perspectives collectively highlight the necessity of rethinking linguistic repertoires to reflect the fluid, dynamic, and diverse realities of contemporary societies. Given that each person’s trajectory is embedded in a unique sociocultural, historical, and political context, Blommaert (2008) points out that certain effects of language learning are lasting and permanent, such as acquiring the grammatical structures of a dominant language within one’s repertoire, whereas others are temporary, dynamic and influenced by personal histories. According to Busch (2021, p. 191), “the repertoire should not simply be understood as located ‘in’ the individual speaker nor as determined by particular time–space constellations regimented by certain expectations and rules, nor as emerging from a particular interactional event. Instead, repertoires can be conceived of as holding an intermediate and mediating position between interactions situated in time and space, (sometimes competing) discourses on linguistic appropriateness, and subjects’ emotionally and bodily lived experience of language”. Busch’s emphasis on the mediating role of linguistic repertoire aligns with Purkarthofer’s conceptualisation in her recent study. Purkarthofer (2021) conceptualises linguistic repertoire as a dynamic collection of semiotic resources that speakers develop throughout their lives, influenced by their

linguistic experiences, encountered ideologies, and the communities they identify with or belong to. Depending on their interlocutors, speakers draw from different parts of their repertoire, thereby continuously shaping and expanding the family's shared repertoire, a process Purkarthofer highlights as inherently interactive.

Similarly, Van Mensel (2018) highlights that children's linguistic repertoire is initially shaped by the immediate family environment. The involvement of family members in the developing social life of children significantly influences their lived experiences and linguistic repertoires.

Drawing on these perspectives, I argue that FLP studies benefit from a focus on how family members' lived experiences of language -including emotional and embodied dimensions- both shape and are shaped by their linguistic repertoires. By viewing families as distinctive speech communities (as suggested by Lanza, 2004, 2007), I find that the concept of repertoire becomes particularly powerful for analysing language dynamics in multilingual family contexts. This perspective challenges the monolingual bias embedded in traditional notions of language as a countable, separate system. However, this does not mean that named languages—such as Turkish, Kurdish, and English—are irrelevant to speakers. Multilingual individuals often recognise and ascribe social and emotional meaning to named languages based on personal experiences, educational histories, and societal language ideologies. For example, my own reflections on using Turkish more than Kurdish in childhood (see Chapter 1) highlight how language policies, familial language practices, and socio-political factors shape the perceived boundaries between languages. These distinctions matter in language ideologies and identity formation, but from a linguistic practice perspective, individuals often operate beyond rigid boundaries, blending resources in creative and strategic ways.

Thus, a repertoire-based approach does not overlook the significance of named languages; rather, it shifts the focus from seeing languages as static categories to examining how individuals mobilise, negotiate, and experience their linguistic resources in everyday life. This aligns with translanguaging theories (García & Li Wei, 2014), which emphasise that multilingual communication is not about switching between separate languages but about drawing flexibly from an integrated linguistic repertoire.

In a setting of “superdiversity” (Blommaert & Backus, 2013), traditional language categorisations and community boundaries blur, reflecting the complex intersections of diaspora, heritage/minority, and host-society languages. By examining the linguistic repertoire through this broader lens, I aim to capture the fluidity and complexity within my participants’ language ideologies and practices, which include Turkish varieties, Kurdish, English, and other forms of expression rooted in their unique migratory paths.

Following Busch (2021), I also argue that recognising the importance of embodied experience emphasises how children’s language ideologies and practices are deeply intertwined with their bodily and emotional experiences. To more effectively capture these dimensions, I employ the Language Portrait technique (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.1 Language Portraits) as a methodological tool to capture these embodied experiences among my child participants more effectively. This approach allows me to investigate how children’s language ideologies and practices are not merely cognitive constructs but are closely tied to their bodily and emotional interactions with language.

In multilingual family settings, such as Turkish-speaking families in the UK in this study, the concept of linguistic repertoire serves as a lens through which we can better understand ‘home language’. Traditionally, home language is considered a singular, heritage language passed down within families. However, drawing on Blommaert’s (2017) idea of repertoires, I propose reconceptualising home language as a pluralistic, adaptive construct, representing a layered, dynamic blend of linguistic resources that includes various varieties of Turkish, English, and Kurdish in my four participant families. This approach reflects not only heritage but also the influence of sociocultural and historical factors -such as migration paths, generational differences, and social interactions- that shape each family’s linguistic landscape. Thus, in the context of this study, I use the notion of ‘home language’ in Turkish-speaking families as not singular but encompasses a rich blend of linguistic varieties, such as Cypriot Turkish, Londoner Turkish, and Kurmanji Kurdish. Instead of viewing these as isolated languages, varieties or registers, I understand home language as a repertoire that reflects the layered and diverse sociocultural influences within each family and for each family member. This expanded notion of home language brings valuable insights to FLP, especially in contexts like Turkish-speaking communities in the UK. Rather than a simple division between heritage and dominant societal language, my findings illustrate how multiple language

varieties, each carrying unique social meanings, contribute to the family's linguistic practices. This layered repertoire underscores FLP as a process of negotiation within the family, where parents and children strategically draw from various languages and dialects to express cultural identities, manage relationships, and engage with both heritage and host cultures.

### **3.4 Child Agency in FLP**

Multilingualism research witnesses a burgeoning curiosity concerning agency and its connection to language use and the construction of identities. Child agency has also become a significant topic of research within the field of multilingualism studies, particularly as researchers have recognised the complex ways in which children navigate and participate in multilingual environments.

Child agency in family language policy research centres around understanding how children actively engage with language use in various contexts and how their language choices and ideologies reflect their agency, identity, and participation in their linguistic communities. They might advocate for the use of a specific language, way of speaking or a particular language repertoire in certain contexts or contribute to decisions about language maintenance or shift. This perspective has enriched the field of multilingualism, and FLP studies as its subfield, by recognising children as key players in shaping their linguistic worlds.

As I mentioned in section 2.3 [Ahearn's definition], using Ahearn's agency definition as my point of departure, I claim that children's agency refers to their socioculturally mediated capacity to act and should be perceived as dynamic and interdependent, especially in its relation to general positioning which shapes the ways in which children enact their agency in everyday interactions (Esser et al., 2016; Smith-Christmas, 2021). While much of the research on child agency within the context of Family Language Policy adopted Ahearn's definition (Bergroth & Palviainen, 2017; Fogle & King, 2013; Gyogi, 2015; Said & Zhu, 2019), there remains an opportunity to explore more fully how this definition might be applied specifically to child agency. In this study, I examine how agency is applied to children's language practices and policies in their multilingual intergenerational families.

Child agency has become a key concept in FLP studies over the last decade. In multilingual families, parents and children often have varying degrees of access to linguistic resources across multiple languages, leading to differences in their language ideologies and everyday language use. These differences subsequently prompt negotiations within the family and provide such environment for children to negotiate as well as enact their agency in shaping FLP (Curd-Christian & Sun, 2022). Everyday interactions between children and other family members include discussions about cultural norms, language practices, and language policies (Fogle & King 2013).

Explorations of child agency within FLP research started with the critiques that children's agentive roles were underexplored in terms of language maintenance. Fogle and King (2013) pointed out that a growing body of work in the field of FLP investigated young children's interactions with their parents on language development. However, many of the early FLP studies focused mainly on parental language ideologies, linguistic input and discourse strategies (see De Houwer, 2007; King & Fogle, 2006; Lanza, 2007) since parental attitudes and understandings encourage to maintain home languages and to support children's bilingual/multilingual identity formation (Conteh, Riasat, & Begum, 2013). In other words, these studies located children as the objects of language rather than its 'agents' (Luykx, 2005).

Children's socialisation into languages and family language policies are not only orchestrated by adults; instead, children actively influence this process through their own agentive roles in communication (Bergroth & Palviainen, 2017). Considering the interactional aspect of caregiver-child socialisation, Luykx (2003, p. 41) suggested that this process "should be viewed in terms of 'participation' rather than merely 'transmission'." Smith-Christmas (2020) stated that similar to FLP, other related disciplines initially viewed parent-child relationship with a unidirectional lens. What is more, Strauss (1992, cited in Smith-Christmas, 2020) used the analogy of a fax machine to illustrate earlier attempts at conceptualising children's socialisation, where parents were perceived as transmitting a copy of specific beliefs and behaviours to their children. Although previous studies on family language policy aimed to establish direct relationships between parental attitudes, language practices, and language outcomes, more recent research has shifted its focus to explore how meanings are created,

experiences are formed, agency is exercised, and identities are constructed within transnational families (King & Lanza, 2019; Purkarthofer & Steien, 2019; Said & Zhu, 2019; Smith-Christmas, 2019). Instead of seeking to establish linear causal relationships with parental practices and outcomes from children's language use, the contemporary language policy research places greater emphasis on understanding the complex and multi-layered nature of family language practices and their relationship to language learning and use among family members. My work aligns with this emerging body of research, as I aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the multi-layered nature of family language practices and their impact on language learning and use among family members.

While considerable research has focused on parental language choices, language ideologies, and family language planning, there remains a noticeable gap in examining the active agency and contributions of children in shaping and negotiating language policies within the family context. In one of the earlier studies on children's interactions in the home language, Tuominen (1999) found that school-age children in multilingual families have an impact on parental policies. That is to say, children's beliefs and practices are not only affected by their parents but also, they affect the policies that parents implemented. "Agency means considering individuals as actors with the ability to make sense of the environment, initiate change, and make choices" (Kuczynski, 2002, p. 9). In this respect, parents and children, impact on each other's socialisation and should, therefore, both be considered agents (Revis, 2016). I consider children as dynamic and active meaning-makers, shaping and negotiating the decisions around them while navigating sociocultural contexts, as Ahearn (2001) suggested.

Children's impact on language use is particularly evident in migrant families, where tensions between ethnic values and norms and those with which the children grow up in their broader environment may lead to intrafamilial differences and negotiations (Revis, 2016). Although parents' ideology, practices and management have influenced children language activities up to a certain age, it is observed that children bring the mainstream language to the home when they start to socialise outside of the family (Shohamy & Spolsky, 2000).

There are two landmark studies in the field of FLP changing the direction of how significant the role of children in terms of shaping language use within the family (Smith-Christmas, 2020). The first one is Gafaranga's (2010) investigation with Rwandan community in Belgium. Through the application of Conversational Analysis, Gafaranga illustrated that the children resisted to their parents' interaction in Kinyarwanda and use French instead as medium-of-interaction. The children not only rejected to adopt their interlocutors' language choices but also modified them with their agency (e.g., silent resistance strategies). Here, child-initiated interactional practices (e.g., 'medium requests') influenced language choices in families' everyday interactions as well as transformed them (Kheirkhah, 2016). Eventually, this process led to a substantial language shift within the Rwandan community, which Gafaranga (2010, p. 242 ) referred to as "talking language shift into being".

The other study considered as a critical turn in child agency is Fogle's (2012) work on transnational adoptive families from the perspective of second language socialisation and discourse analysis. In terms of child agency, she identified three types of agency enactments that the Russian adoptive children with US caregivers use: resistance through 'nothing' response, participation through the frequent use of wh-questions and negotiation towards the caregivers' use of language. "Like Gafaranga, Fogle emphasises how analysing child agency in the context of family language use is not simply a matter of examining what the children are doing (e.g. resisting their caregivers' linguistic regimes) but understanding how these actions impact current and future family language practices" (Smith-Christmas, 2020, p. 220). This perspective highlights that children renegotiate, co-construct and transform language policy and practices that their caregivers prefer to apply.

Apart from these studies, Revis (2016) examined child agency in FLP employing Bourdieusian theory as a conceptual framework. By investigating child agency in Ethiopian and Colombian refugee families in New Zealand, she found that the children shaped their *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977) that affected cultural and linguistic practices in their families. She also pointed out the gap between the parents' ethnic values and that of children who grew up in their new living context (*habitus*). There are five types of children's socialisation practices identified by Revis: (1) medium requests, (2) metalinguistic comments, (3) language brokering, (4) sociocultural socialisation, and (5)

majority language teaching. Children's use of 'metalinguistic comments' refers to their explicit assessment of language choice at a metalinguistic level, such as determining which language to use or which words to employ. Fogle and King (2013) illustrated that children establish rules about which languages should be used during interactions and correct each other in their preferred language. Similarly, Smith-Christmas (2016) demonstrated a 4-year-old child, during interactions with family members, firmly advocated for certain words to be expressed in English rather than Gaelic.

Said and Zhu (2019) investigated 3<sup>rd</sup> generation bilingual Arabic-speaking children's agency during mealtime multiparty conversations. They illustrated how the children use their knowledge of the parent's choice for speaking Arabic to gain their attention from them. The authors proposed that a flexible FLP which allows children to discursively blend their two languages (in this case, it is Arabic and English) to negotiate their multilingual agentive roles at home, may help children to create positive experiences into home language development. These positive experiences, therefore, help children to assert their agency to develop a close family relationship. Similarly, Danjo (2018) examined how the two bilingual children creatively and strategically negotiated and exercised their parents' strict monolingual ideology in her case study of a bilingual Japanese-English family residing in the UK. The children used translanguaging to avoid being corrected by their mother, who insisted on speaking Japanese.

The agentive role of children to comply or resist their parents' language beliefs and practices can also serve as a motivating factor behind language maintenance or shifts. For example, Kheirkhah and Cekaite (2015), investigated language socialisation within a Persian-Kurdish family in Sweden, focusing on how the "one-parent, one-language" family language policies are established and navigated through interactions between parents and children. From the video recordings, ethnographic observations, and interviews, it is illustrated that the child resists her parents' positioning of themselves as experts in the heritage language. Although the parents attempt to teach the child through language instruction, they frequently accommodate her by terminating these efforts when she shows resistance. Therefore, the research underscores the significance of the child's participation and collaboration for any parental efforts to maintenance heritage language use, shedding light on factors affecting family language policy.

In migrant/ transnational families, children often have greater access to a new language than their parents do, and they socialise their parents into the linguistic and sociocultural facets of their country of settlement through sociocultural socialisation. Guo (2014), for example, investigated intercultural mediating role of Chinese children in the UK. These efforts included teaching the parents mainstream society's sociocultural concepts such as 'poppy day' or teaching them English food terminology and usage.

As detailed below young people use their multilingual capital and their knowledge of regional and diasporic varieties to negotiate meaning and identity options (Caldas & Caron-Caldas, 2002; Fogle, 2013; Luykx, 2005). Frequently, parental language decisions are contested by child agency which causes conflicts within families (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020). For instance, the findings from Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002) work indicated that children tend to choose the dominant language of society as they grow up, despite their parents' efforts to encourage bilingualism. Similarly, Curdt-Christiansen (2013b) found that Chinese minority children in Singapore repeatedly used code-switching to English when they discussed school assignments with their parents.

From a second language socialisation standpoint, Duff (2007) emphasised that "novices also 'teach' or convey to their more proficient interlocutors what their communicative needs are, and the process of socialisation is therefore seen to be bidirectional – or multidirectional if multiple models of expertise co-exist" (Duff, 2007, p. 311). Thus, there might be explicit or implicit strategies which children use to show their communicative needs or change the way of communication when they interact with their grandparents and the older members of the community as well as their parents. Additionally, family bi/multilingualism through extended family members such as aunts, uncles and grandparents has been less studied (Smith-Christmas, 2014). Ruby (2012) explored how Bangladeshi children's maintenance of the minority language was affected by the role of grandmothers in East London. Taking a sociocultural perspective, she examined children's learning within intergenerational collaborative interactions. Her data revealed that grandparents have an impact on transmitting the minority language as well as the linguistic and cultural identity to the third-generation grandchildren. Grandparents serve as role models for language usage, encompassing aspects like literacy and religious practices, and they provide a setting for grandchildren to observe and learn the home language. Ruby offers a detailed exploration of how one grandmother-granddaughter

interaction in the study illustrates teaching and learning strategies to effectively engage in Bangla literacy. Similarly, Ishizawa (2004) used language shift theory to show that residing with non-English-speaking grandparents influenced grandchildren's minority language use in inter-generational households. In particular, this influence was more salient with grandmothers rather than grandfathers as they were reflecting great involvement about grandparenting compared to grandfathers.

In addition to the role of intergenerational interaction, recent studies from various perspectives have emphasised the significance of sibling interactions, which can also inform our understanding of child agency in FLP research. Although not specifically focused on FLP, Rindstedt and Aronsson (2002) study on intergenerational language socialisation of the Quichua-Spanish speaking community demonstrated how sibling interaction is an important aspect for home language maintenance. The study revealed that sibling's interaction contributed to the language shift from the minority language to Spanish as the older siblings spoke predominantly Spanish to the younger ones. In this context, siblings can have a constraining effect on each other's language learning and impact on the familial language policies. Similarly, Barron-Hauwaert (2011), in an online survey with 105 families who have at least two children, illustrated that parents adjust their language strategies according to their children's choices. Also, parents stated that older siblings mostly contributed to the maintenance of the home language when they spent considerable time and shared interests with the younger siblings by using the minority language in their interactions. These studies highlight the importance of different dimensions (parent-child, sibling, peer and intergenerational interactions) offering insights into factors that may influence children's agency within FLP.

Children's peer groups also play an essential role in their preference to maintain or shift their heritage languages. By using the language socialisation theory, Kyratzis (2010) demonstrated that a peer group of linguistic minority children attending a bilingual Spanish-English preschool in California use bilingual practices (such as code-switching or inscribing some domain associations for English and Spanish) in their local peer group's social order. Similarly, Tarim (2011) examined the everyday interactions of a peer group of the second-generation Turkish immigrant children in two Arizona settings; an elementary school, and a Turkish Saturday (heritage language) school. She found that these Turkish-English bilingual/multilingual children exercise bilingual practices. They

use mostly English in their peer group interactions at English-only elementary school and the Turkish Saturday school, and they created domain-associations for Turkish and English through their language practices (e.g., Turkish for adult voicing and religious messages; English for peer talk). Additionally, in her ethnographic study on children's language practices in Dominica, Paugh (2005) found that the increased time spent out of school peer play activity created possibilities for children to use their heritage language (Patwa) for entertaining play purposes, even though their parents encouraged them to use the language of school (English). Thus, the study argues that children's peer talk can have a positive effect on the continuity of minority languages. Fogle and King (2013) described peer interactions under the group of family-external forces (see the distinction of family-internal and family-external forces in Canagarajah, 2008) and emphasised that the beliefs and practices of family-external forces (such as race, language competence and identity) influenced and formed family language policy.

The studies mentioned above prove that family language policy research is a burgeoning field of inquiry. It has been investigated from different perspectives, methods, and within different communities in the last two decade. To date, no work has been identified regarding children's agency in FLP research in Turkish-speaking communities in the UK. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of research in FLP with data from Turkish-speaking multilingual families.

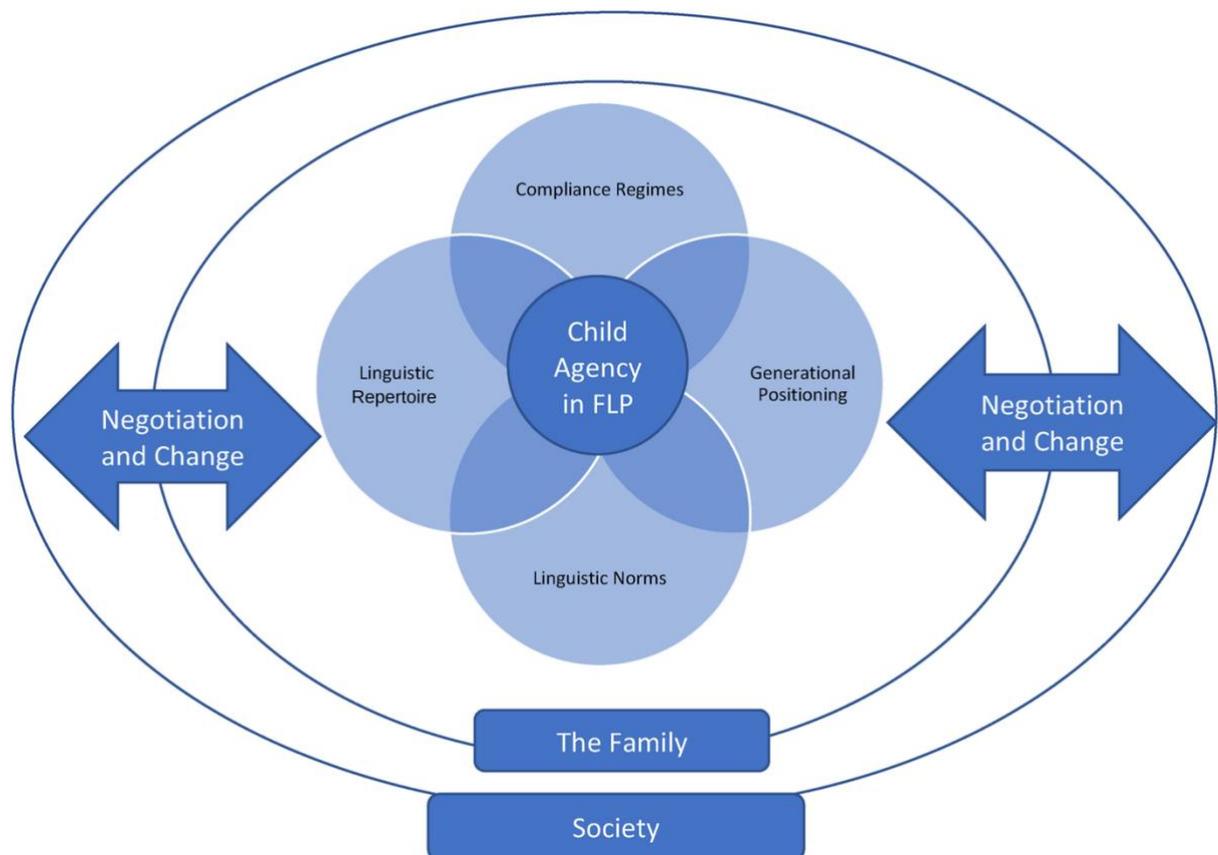
### **3.4.1 A Modified Model for Understanding Child Agency in Family Language Policy**

This section presents a dynamic model I have developed, modified from the work of Smith-Christmas (2020, 2021), to better conceptualise child agency within FLP research. While building on Smith-Christmas's foundational ideas, this model introduces new elements that address the specific ways children contribute to shaping family language practices. It highlights the active role children play in negotiating language use at home, showing that FLP is influenced not only by parental strategies but also by children's individual choices, responses, and interactions within the family.

As recently emerging area of research, children's agency brings our attention to children's significance since they are considered as important as adults in discussions about strategies for language maintenance within the household. FLP has unveiled the extensive

range of linguistic repertoires that children employ to enact agency within their everyday interactions. It is extensively addressed in previous section that in the last decade of FLP studies, attention has been given to the children's agency in the maintenance of home language.

The absence of conceptual clarity regarding the application of agency to children's language ideologies and practices was well-addressed in Smith-Christmas's (2020; 2021) pioneering examinations. To construct a comprehensive framework for thoroughly examining how children enact their agency within the context of FLP, she formulated a model. In this model, Smith-Christmas (2021) conceptualises child agency in FLP along the lines of four dimensions that intersect with each other and cannot be easily disentangled from one another. These four dimensions are a) compliance regimes, b) linguistic norms, c) linguistic *competence* and d) generational positioning. Informed by this model, I have adapted it in my research by replacing 'linguistic competence' with 'linguistic repertoire,' a modification I discuss in detail in Section 3.3.1.3, *Linguistic Repertoire*. I then employ these four forms of agency in my analysis to understand how children in London Turkish-speaking families enact their agency in terms of the negotiation of language ideologies, practices, and policy at home.



**Figure 4.** The intersectional, multidimensional, and multi-layered nature of child agency in FLP (modified in this research from Smith-Christmas, 2021, p. 357),

This figure visually portrays the intricate, multi-dimensional, and layered types of child agency in FLP context and shows how enactments of agency are both the product of negotiation and renegotiation.

The inner circle illustrates children’s discussions with their families concerning language policies at home, while the outer circle denotes that family interactions are shaped by and play a role in shaping the external factors (e.g. linguistic and cultural norms of broader society, schools). Between these two circles, the dual-directional arrows depict the reciprocal relationship between these distinct layers. In the model, children’s agency is divided into four intersectional enactments (compliance regimes, linguistic repertoire, linguistic norms, generational positioning). Yet, this divisions do not imply that these dimensions can be effortlessly separated from one another. Instead, it demonstrates how their convergence offers a meaningful starting point for investigating the myriad ways in which children can enact their agency (Smith-Christmas, 2021).

In the following, I explain how these four dimensions can be useful to analyse the agentic acts of children within the context of multilingualism research.

#### **3.4.1.1 Compliance Regimes**

In the context of FLP and sociolinguistic studies, compliance regimes refer to the structured expectations, rules, and strategies caregivers or authority figures use to guide and reinforce specific language behaviours. These regimes establish when, where, and how particular languages should be spoken, shaping language use patterns within families, particularly in multilingual households. Compliance regimes include both explicit directives, such as instructing a child to “Speak Language X,” and implicit norms, like the unspoken expectation that a child will use a certain language with specific family members or in certain settings (Smith-Christmas, 2020).

Determining a child’s motivation behind a specific decision can be complex due to various factors at play as discussed in Chapter 3, 3.2.2. section. Behind the directive to “Speak Language X” lie deeply rooted ideologies, as caregivers often emphasize the cultural, social, or heritage significance of this language. If a child refrains from using Language X, it may be seen as a form of resistance, demonstrating a type of agency. However, the instruction to “Speak Language X” can be conveyed in various ways. For instance, caregivers might explicitly explain the benefits of bilingualism or subtly reinforce language use through implicit strategies that unfold over time.

Smith-Christmas (2020, p. 223) states that “what children understand as compliance and caregivers in turn accept as compliance is usually a matter of negotiation over time and space through multiple interactions”. Therefore, navigating the regimes of compliance requires a nuanced exploration of ongoing negotiation unfolding across various interactions, both temporally and spatially.

Lanza’s (1997) groundbreaking research provides a concrete illustration of the application of compliance regimes within the framework of family language policy. In this study, we encounter a Norwegian-American family who adopt one-parent-one-language (OPOL) strategy in their family based in Norway. The parents explicitly set the expectation that their children use Norwegian as compliant code with the father and English as compliant code when interacting with the mother. The way in which this directive is encoded signifies that compliance is closely related to language and interlocutor (Palviainen &

Boyd, 2013; Smith-Christmas, 2020). Through the efforts both concurrently (during the interaction itself) and over time (accumulated across a sequence of interactions), parents usually try to establish the compliance with the children. Thus, as one of the forms of child agency, the establishment of compliance indicates the presence of numerous interactions between caregivers and children in different contexts over time and space, underpinning this process.

Children's reaction to this 'Speak Language X' command holds significant implications. If children adhere to this directive, it signifies the successful integration of the policy within that specific timeframe. Various factors may contribute to this compliance, including the child's recognition of the policy's importance, the desire to please the parents, or the ease of navigating between linguistic contexts.

In instances where the child is non-compliant with the caregivers, specific strategies come into play. When confronted with non-compliance, parents may choose to employ overt marking strategies. For instance, if the child addresses the Norwegian father in English in Lanza's (1997) study, the father may ignore the child until he/she switches to Norwegian until the child uses the compliant code, which is Norwegian in this case.

Conversely, parents might utilise covert marking techniques, addressing instances of non-compliance without explicit indication. Instances of non-compliant code choices may smoothly integrate into the conversation, gently steering the child back towards the intended compliant code without direct criticism. As Lanza (1997) notes, caregivers often employ covert signalling through changes in tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, or subtle linguistic cues like hesitation, repetition, or correction.

Alternatively, parents may initiate a code-switch themselves, engaging the child in the non-compliant language rather than employing overt or covert markings. By employing this strategy, they encourage a shift towards the child's intended compliant code, which results in a shift in family language policy. As an illustration of this process, Gafaranga's (2010) key study with Rwandan families in Belgium highlights how language shift takes place within this community. While caregivers initiate communication by selecting Kinyarwanda as the language of interaction, the children challenge the dominance of Kinyarwanda and instead use French. Caregivers respond to this scenario by either not marking the child's language choice as non-compliant and instead continue

communicating in Kinyarwanda while the child persists in using French, or by transitioning to French themselves. At this point, Smith-Christmas (2020, p. 223) raises a crucial question: “To what extent can children’s habitual linguistic choices be considered an act of resistance if the parameters of compliance have not been set in place?” This question arises because the caregiver’s use of Kinyarwanda does not appear as a strongly established language policy for the children to comply or resist. Nevertheless, Gafaranga argues that the children show resistance and skilfully shape the power dynamics between caregiver and themselves. What supports Gafaranga’s argument is that only the children call for the switch and the direction of switch is always from Kinyarwanda to French and eventually, only the children accomplish medium requests.

Gradually, the accumulation of these compliance mechanisms might reveal the mutual expectation about language use in families when engaging in communication. Thus, it gives a rise for certain linguistic norms to develop. Linguistic norms influence the decisions children made. In other words, the gradual accumulation of these compliance mechanisms can unveil the mutual expectations regarding language usage within family communication, thereby fostering the emergence of specific linguistic norms over time. These norms, in turn, play a pivotal role in shaping the choices made by children.

#### **3.4.1.2 Linguistic Norms**

In her model for conceptualising child agency in FLP context, Smith-Christmas (2020; 2021) indicates linguistic norms as one of the child agency types. Children’s accreted acts of linguistic compliance or resistance may gradually establish specific linguistic norms within the family. Hence, it becomes evident that a notably reflexive interconnection exists among compliance and linguistic norms in terms of child agency. Within FLP context, children exercise their agency not only through their decision to employ the language code designated by the caregiver as the compliant option, but they may also resist to the implemented language-of-interaction and lead to a shift by actively reinforcing these compliance mechanisms, for instance, by correcting their parents’ non-compliant preferences as it is highlighted in Gafaranga’s study.

Returning to Gafaranga’s (2010) research, it is indicated that Kinyarwanda emerges as the medium of interaction for the caregivers/adults, while French becomes the norm for the children’s language use. Despite conversations commencing in Kinyarwanda,

children consistently respond in French, seeking to adopt either medium request to Kinyarwanda-French parallel mode, or only French. Consequently, the adults do not expect children responding in Kinyarwanda, in fact they do not employ any strategies for implementing reverse medium request (from French to Kinyarwanda). Therefore, the children's resistance (or non-compliance with the use of Kinyarwanda) as an act of agency leads to language shift in the Rwandan community, subsequently evolves into a linguistic norm.

Children's agency does not always manifest as resistance against parental compliance codes. A recent study by Smith-Christmas and Ruiséal (2022) involving Irish families in Ireland illustrates that children's compliance to caregivers' directive of designating Irish as the compliant choice can also be constructed as an expression of agency. While Irish is established as the language of interaction within the examined family, the mother – who enforces this norm – occasionally attempts to renegotiate this norm by speaking English in the presence of individuals who do not speak Irish. The children do not allow their mother deviating from the established linguistic norm. Therefore, the children's effort to strictly follow Irish-language-of-interaction policy is their compliance regimes and, thus, an act of agency. Remarkably, their agentive role not only limits their mother's own agency but also plays a role in solidifying the norm of Irish as the preferred mode of interaction. Furthermore, these children, by reinforcing the Irish-language norm, contribute to shaping their FLP. Hence, children play crucial role in shaping the establishment of linguistic norms, which subsequently influence the overall language policies for maintaining the languages.

#### **3.4.1.3 Linguistic Repertoire**

In cases involving families such as transnational families of diverse types, blended families, and various other instances, it is important to note that 'the family' might not always represent a 'relatively stable' speech community (Van Mensel, 2018). That is, transnational, multilingual families can be seen as evolving social units. Similarly, Blommaert and Backus (2013) point out that modern migration patterns and global communication technologies have led to great cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity. Traditional terms like 'diaspora', 'minority', and 'community' no longer adequately capture the complexities of these families. Neighbourhoods that once housed

homogeneous groups of migrants now consist of varied and unpredictable migrant populations from around the world. While local neighbourhoods remain central to social life, the internet and mobile phones allow families to maintain connections and practices across different locations. Thus, transnational multilingual families are continually adapting and evolving.

This nature of transnational/minority communities often leads renegotiation and co-construct of language policies within family members. The initial linguistic trajectory of a child is significantly influenced by the immediate family environment. However, those children bring mainstream language in when they start to socialise into wider community, especially when they entered to mainstream school education of the country in which they reside (Shohamy & Spolsky, 2000). In simpler terms, both the involvement of family members in the evolving social unit of their family and the wider society directly impacts the individual experience and linguistic resources of children possess.

In this study, I adopt the concept of linguistic repertoire to frame my analysis, as it encompasses the dynamic and evolving range of linguistic resources available to both individuals and families. The multilingual language repertoire of the family, therefore, signifies a collective repertoire that is, to a certain extent, shared among all family members (Van Mensel, 2018). Nonetheless, just like an individual's repertoire is never static, the family language repertoire is also dynamic, characterised by both limitations and possibilities (Busch, 2012). The family's language use can thus be negotiated, encouraged, or even challenged by both caregivers and children. By situating my framework within the concept of linguistic repertoire, I aim to capture the adaptive and interactional nature of language use in transnational family settings.

Both Gafaranga (2010) and Smith-Christmas (2021) approach to the inquiry: “to what extent can a child's use of a particular language be considered a choice if the child appears to lack the choice (i.e. does not have the requisite linguistic skills) to say the utterance in a particular language?” (Smith-Christmas, 2020, p. 225) from a competence-related perspective, arguing that a child's response in the dominant language means that child lacks the linguistic capability to respond in their minority language. However, following Blommaert (2010), I argue that our focus should be on repertoires—the complex sets of resources people actually have and use, rather than abstract, idealised languages

measuring the individual's ability with traditional notions of 'competence' or 'incompetence' in a language. This approach highlights the dynamic and context-dependent nature of language use, challenging the simplistic labelling of linguistic competence.

In contemporary, super-diverse urban contexts, such as Turkish-speaking communities in London, multilingual repertoires often appear what Blommaert (2010) called as 'truncated', meaning they do not consist of fully developed 'languages' but rather a mix of specific semiotic resources. These resources may include accents, language varieties, registers, genres, and modalities. They represent various ways of using language in specific communicative settings and areas of life, shaped by people's ideologies about language use.

Informed by a post-structuralist perspective, I view language as inherently complex and fluid, shaped by social, cultural, and historical contexts. This perspective aligns with my understanding of linguistic repertoires as dynamic and adaptive constructs, emphasising the interplay between individuals' sociocultural environments and their available linguistic resources. Additionally, I argue that a competence-related perspective falls short in elucidating the active role children play in exercising their agency when choosing to use a particular language or way of speaking from their linguistic repertoire. By recognising the fluid and situated nature of communicative resources, we can better understand how children navigate and influence their linguistic environments, thereby actively participating in the establishment and reinforcement of linguistic norms within their communities. Just as linguistic repertoires are portrayed as dynamic and ever-expanding, children's linguistic capabilities evolve and adapt over time. This reflects their agency in actively shaping their linguistic resources to express preferences, negotiate meanings, and assert their identities within various social contexts including their transnational, multilingual families.

Therefore, I modified one of the four dimensions for conceptualising child agency in FLP and replaced 'linguistic competence' with 'linguistic repertoire' in the model originally proposed by Smith-Christmas (2020; 2021), addressing my perspective as outlined above.

Recent studies illustrate how children actively use their linguistic repertoire to exercise agency. For instance, Said and Zhu (2019) studied one Arabic and English-speaking

multilingual family in the UK to examine how children in multilingual family develop their linguistic repertoire and enact their agency in language use and socialisation. Key findings reveal that children actively engage with their social environment by using their linguistic repertoire to achieve goals and influence interactions. For example, Hamid, a child-participant in this study, uses Arabic as a code-of-interaction to gain attention from his father, demonstrating strategic language use. By choosing Arabic and making an error -whether intentional or not- he prompts his father to engage with him, showcasing his ability to navigate and influence the dynamics of the conversation. While Hamid may initially appear to embrace his novice status, he subtly exerts control over the interaction using his linguistic repertoire. Additionally, when his mother praise him in English in the interaction, he insists she use the Arabic term 'shaatir' reflecting his preference for intensified affective praise. This demonstrates Hamid's understanding of emotional nuances in language and his ability to assert his desired identity as 'clever/shaatir' within his family context. Hamid asserts his agency by persuading his mother to switch from English to Arabic and to use a specific praise term that acknowledges him as embodying the qualities of a 'shaatir' individual.

In another example, Purkarthofer (2021) examines how German-speaking families in Norway manage partially shared linguistic and cultural repertoires. She investigated one family who moved to Norway a year ago with two children (1 and 5 years old) and found that the children's use of their linguistic resources to speak German at home and Norwegian at daycare, along with their interactions with their godmother (the parent's best friend), illustrates their agency in shaping their linguistic repertoires. The children balance their home language with the dominant societal language, making strategic choices based on context, relationships, and social integration even at such early ages. The children's preference for speaking German with their godmother, despite their parents' wish for more Norwegian, reflects their agency in maintaining emotional connections through language choice. While the parents consider Norwegian as a future family language, the children's current use of German at home and with the godmother indicates their active role in shaping the family's linguistic landscape. Purkarthofer (2021) further indicates that linguistic resources are not incorporated into repertoires for isolated use; they carry information about their practical applications, emotional dimensions, and connections to specific experiences. Consequently, language choice is shaped not only by

accessibility but also by the emotional ties and personal experiences linked to each language. This understanding is particularly significant in multilingual family settings, where emotional connections and lived experiences with different languages often influence how family members negotiate and enact their linguistic practices. In the context of Turkish-speaking families in transnational settings, this perspective offers a valuable lens for examining the interplay between emotional dimensions, language ideologies, and the dynamic nature of family language policies.

Children develop and embody their linguistic repertoire through their interactions, experiences, and emotional connections. These embodied experiences influence their language choices and expressions, demonstrating their agency in interpreting and responding to their environment.

#### **3.4.1.4 Generational Positioning**

Children's capacity for agency emerges from their engagement within social surroundings and is shaped through interactions with other generations (see section 2.2. Child Agency in Childhood Studies). This understanding of agency is further enhanced by acknowledging that terms like 'child' gain significance by being juxtaposed and discussed alongside other generational categories such as 'adults,' or 'the elderly' (Abebe, 2019). As one of the agency forms, generational positioning embodies how ordering of generations influences language choice and, by doing this, has the potential to challenge the expected generational roles (Smith-Christmas, 2021).

As (Revis, 2016) indicates that in migrant families, children's influence on language use becomes especially noticeable, as disparities between the ethnic values and norms caregivers bring from their home culture and children's growing up in new environment often result in negotiations at family level. In these circumstances, children quickly grasp the cultural knowledge of the majority culture, and they hold the capacity to actively introduce their parents to the dominant language and culture. Therefore, asymmetry in power dynamics may exist between children and their caregiver. In other words, ordering of generations that traditionally assigns the role of the expert to adults and the role of the novice to children can be challenged, which may lead to create opportunities for children to use language as a means to exercise their agency in everyday interactions.

One way to exercise their agency within generational positioning is children's language brokering role. As (Revis, 2016) explains, this subversion of roles can cause unease for parents, and the accumulation of language brokering interactions has the potential to trigger a shift in parent-child dynamics. Smith-Christmas (2020) demonstrates how children's agency operates on two distinct levels: firstly, through their actions (such as performing language brokering), and secondly, through the resulting changes within the family dynamic – in this instance, the inversion of traditional power dynamics. Language brokering in the context of FLP clearly underscores how possessing different linguistic and cultural capital introduces another layer to the reciprocal nature of language socialisation. Beyond that, children, especially in the context of transnational families, have the potential to also acclimate their parents to the broader socio-cultural environment. However, the relationship between these generations should not necessarily be defined solely by opposition but can also be mutually productive. Purkarthofer (2019, p. 726) states that: "As parents and children move through social and geographical spaces, they encounter different language ideologies and different language regimes." In a similar vein, (Mirvahedi, 2021) notes that language ideologies, practices, and management within a family are not isolated from their social surroundings. Instead, they engage with the sociopolitical, historical, and economic contexts in which families are situated. Therefore, the lived experiences of all family members provide different perspectives and enrich multilingual family repertoire.

In conclusion, this model of child agency offers a valuable framework for understanding the diverse ways children assert their agentive roles within FLP. Drawing inspiration from this model, my study incorporates a nuanced modification to highlight linguistic repertoire as a critical aspect of agency. This adjustment enhances our understanding of how children navigate and influence their linguistic environments, thereby providing deeper insights into the interplay between language development and agency.

By replacing linguistic competence with linguistic repertoire, this study shifts the focus from assessing children's language skills in discrete languages to understanding how they navigate and negotiate their full range of linguistic and semiotic resources. This perspective accounts for the flexibility, adaptability, and embodied nature of multilingual communication, acknowledging that children's agency is exercised through their ability

to strategically draw on their repertoires rather than conforming to predefined linguistic norms.

Furthermore, my research extends Smith-Christmas' model by integrating external sociocultural influences, such as peer interactions, digital media, and institutional discourse (complementary schools), into the framework of generational positioning. While FLP studies typically analyse child agency within the parent-child dynamic, my findings highlight how siblings, grandparents, and digital engagements play a crucial role in shaping children's language practices and agency.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter critically approaches the prevailing view in most Family Language Policy (FLP) studies regarding children as subjects or outcomes of established language policies, with parents assumed to be the primary agents of their language development. In this context, it is emphasised that recent research acknowledges children actively contribute to family language dynamics as socialising agents, both shaping their own linguistic environment and influencing their parents' language practices. This recognition of children's agency underscores the interactive nature of parent-child socialisation and the reciprocal relationship in language development within families. By addressing the discussions about what agency means, and how it is conceptualised in childhood studies, child agency is acknowledged as the intertwined cultural, social, historical, political, institutional, and material contexts of childhood. Given the importance of dynamic and fluid nature, it is highlighted that when childhood perceptions evolve, the exploration of children's influence in families and society continues to evolve. Therefore, child agency intertwines with complex political, educational, cultural, and ideological factors that shape family dynamics. Then, this chapter has undertaken a critical examination of conceptualising child agency within the realm of Family Language Policy. As evident in the literature, the concept of agency is multi-faceted, layered, and complex. Throughout this inquiry, the focal point has centred on four intersecting dimensions of child agency in FLP research: compliance, linguistic competencies, linguistic norms, and generational ordering. In this chapter, it is also emphasised that the shift in language studies towards critical and poststructuralist viewpoints has prompted the reimagining of language and identity concepts. Post-structuralist approaches enable a

more nuanced and intricate examination of identity facets, accommodating hybrid identities and allowing individuals and groups to negotiate, resist, or transform established identity norms. This dynamic perspective considers identity as something fluid and dynamic, subject to transformation and recreation within family and broader interactions.

## Chapter 4 Methodology and Research Design

In this section, I discuss the distinctive methodological aspects of this study. To start, I address the overall characteristics and the underlying reasoning behind the chosen research approach. Subsequently, I justify the specific techniques that I employ to gather data.

### 4.1 Introduction

My research focus is to understand children's agentic role in family language policy and their identity development while socialising with their parents, grandparents and siblings in Turkish-speaking communities in London. The main question in this study would be "How do children negotiate and enact their agency through FLP in Turkish-speaking families in the UK?".

In this regard, the following research questions have emerged;

1. How do children negotiate their linguistic repertoires in their multilingual, intergenerational families?
2. How do children influence and reshape family language policies through their everyday language practices and interactions?
3. In what ways do children's language ideologies and management efforts contribute to the transformation, maintenance, or adaptation of family language practices?

The questions above require a fruitful and deeper understanding of language use and the sense of identity as well as the individual's role in making decisions about the home language use in the intimate setting of the family. A qualitative oriented approach is appropriate in order to examine such questions to gain insightful data. This is because a qualitative approach is associated with some aspect of the human life and focuses on the different patterns of social life to find out how people react to the problems/ situations they face, how they interact with each other in a different context and answers '*why* and *how* a certain phenomenon may occur rather than *how often*' (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 3) whereas a quantitative approach is based on the hypothesis and theories as well as positivist investigation via the numerical and quantifiable form of data. As Greig et al.

(2007) highlight, qualitative research is ‘non-experimental research, which is subjective, insider, holistic, naturalistic, valid, inductive, exploratory, ungeneralizable and discovery-oriented’ (p.47). Therefore, there are some research questions which cannot be answered by experimental and statistical analysis such as the complex structure of individual’s role in their language choices and use in family settings or the beliefs and values which affect decisions of family members on what language(s) to maintain and practice. As these social phenomena seek an in-depth understanding of human actions, I consider adopting a qualitative approach, and I thus employ ethnography as the methodology of my study.

In this chapter, I clarify my methodological position and research design. Based on the theoretical considerations, the following sections justify the data collection and data analysis methods I employ in this research, including the choice of research context and participants. In the end, I discuss practical issues, such as those concerning the researcher’s positionality and ethical considerations throughout the study.

#### **4.1.1 Why ethnography as research methodology?**

Wei (2019, p. 154) describes ethnography as “an account of someone’s observation of and experience with a community and their cultural practices in specific contexts”.

Ethnographic research involves the researcher actively participating in people’s daily lives for a substantial period of time. This is achieved through various methods, such as observing and listening to their interactions, conducting interviews, and documenting experiences using field notes and narratives. The main feature of the ethnographic research is that “people’s actions and accounts are studied in everyday contexts, rather than under conditions created by the researcher” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3). Ethnography involves studying people within naturally occurring settings, which serve as the field for the researcher. This is accomplished using methods that capture their everyday actions and societal interpretations. This ‘natural setting’ of participants brings different variables as they respond to the things around them differently, but at the same time, it provides rich and holistic data by giving the researchers access to “different angles of the phenomenon observed” (Alasuutari, 1995, p. 45). In other words, coming into the people’s everyday life enables the researcher to understand social reality in their own terms (i.e., from the participants' perspectives), as it is understood by the participants, and helps to gain insight about the phenomena s/he wishes to study by paying closer attention

to the participants' interactions with others, experiences and interpretations in complex situations. That is, ethnography offers sensitivity to the complexities and differences in people's life which is one of the main reasons why I employ this approach. The aim of my research, therefore, is to explore the highly complex nature of language ideologies, practices and maintenance negotiated among the family members from one of the linguistic minorities in the UK.

Ethnographic research, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) stated, has been also concerned with producing descriptions and explanations of particular phenomena, or with developing theories, rather than with testing existing hypotheses (p. 21). In his foundational anthropological linguistic research, Malinowski (1922) highlighted 'foreshadowed problems' which are the general problems or questions that the researchers have in mind instead of preconceived ideas and hypotheses. Therefore, ethnographic research design does not necessarily require a set of predetermined questions and fixed ideas before the study.

Gregory (1983, p. 366) also pointed out that the nature of ethnographic research is that "no homogeneous units or specific characteristics of culture are defined a priori, but rather those groups and processes recognized by native participants are discovered and studied in their terms during the research". It is a reflexive process in which the researcher adapts and transforms the questions or re-designs the project over the course of research according to the themes encountered in the fieldwork. "Eventually, through this process, the inquiry will become progressively more clearly focused on a specific set of research questions, and this will then allow the strategic collection of data to pursue answers to those questions more effectively, and to test these against evidence" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3). Hence, this process offers rich data in terms of finding out the implicit ideas, which are mostly ignored or missed to understand why and how people do things. Following this key feature of ethnography, family language policy researchers who employ ethnography emphasise that "the strength of this research tradition is practically unlimited and easy access to natural speech data and deep insights into the hidden areas of the family life" (Kopeliovich, 2013, p. 251). Similarly, one of the early researchers of FLP, Luykx (2003, p. 39) highlighted the necessity to understand the nature of decision-making processes at the family level as these "decisions are often implicit and unconscious, but they are no less crucial to determining the speed and direction of

language shift”. Therefore, a detailed description of an individual’s action, decision or behaviour in the family can be investigated through ethnography. Additionally, Alanen (1988, p. 60) highlights the reflexive nature of child agency regarding that the agency of children is formed within social network and states that “the agentic presentness of children is understood in terms of children’s lived experience, which can be empirically investigated through ethnographic and qualitative methods”. So that, I collect these detailed ethnographic data to develop a deeper understanding of the decision-making processes of language use in family settings with a particular focus to children’s agency in every possible interaction with others.

Researchers from FLP studies of immigrant and autochthonous minority communities mainly employ ethnography as methodology, especially with participant observation in the centre of data collection (for example Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; Smith-Christmas, 2016; Wei, 1994) in order to analyze the social life of studied community along with the speakers.

Investigating children’s agency in this context, I acknowledge agency as it arises from different social, political, cultural aspects. Ethnography provides a comprehensive and immersive lens through which to observe and understand the complex interplay between children’s actions, their familial context, and the sociocultural environment in which they are embedded.

One of the central aims of this study is to explore the reciprocal relationship between children’s agency and family language policy within Turkish-speaking families in London. Ethnography is particularly suited to addressing this aim because it provides tools for capturing the complex, dynamic, and contextual nature of human behaviour and interaction. Through an ethnographic lens, the study can examine how children negotiate their linguistic repertoires, influence FLP through everyday practices, and engage in intergenerational interactions that shape their identities and language ideologies. Ethnographic observation enables the documentation of how children use language in real-time to navigate multilingual and intergenerational family contexts (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

Ethnography’s focus on everyday practices makes it ideal for studying how children influence and reshape family language policies. As Spolsky (2004) emphasises, FLP is

not a static construct but evolves through interactions. Ethnographic methods capture these dynamic interactions, including how children assert their preferences, resist compliance, or adapt to parental expectations. Ethnography is also well-suited to analysing the interplay between children's language ideologies and their role in maintaining or transforming family language practices. By examining both explicit management efforts (e.g., rules around language use) and implicit practices (e.g., language switching during play or conflict resolution), ethnography offers a comprehensive view of these processes (Heath & Street, 2008).

Ethnography enables me to not only gather empirical data but also to examine the lived experiences, everyday interactions, and social meanings that shape and are shaped by these children's actions. This method allows me to go beyond surface-level observations and instead uncover the intricate nuances and patterns that contribute to the construction of agency within the multilingual family settings. Furthermore, ethnography allows for a nuanced exploration of the contextual factors that influence the children's agency, including family dynamics, cultural norms, language policies, and generational interactions. By immersing myself in the community and actively participating in their lives, I establish rapport and trust, which is crucial for obtaining authentic insights and understanding the complexities of their agency dynamics. This method aligns with the goal of uncovering not only what the children do but also why and how they do it, all within the context of their familial and sociocultural surroundings.

Ethnography provides a range of systematic data collection techniques, gathered through various means such as participant observation, field notes, audio and video recordings of interactions, interviews, documents, maps, drawings, and pictures of artifacts. Apart from this variety in the techniques, ethnography enables the interconnectedness of different parts of data (Wei, 2019) which makes it a holistic method. While analysing a particular aspect of a phenomenon in an ethnographic study, the researchers also gain understandings of the entire phenomenon. One of the key objectives of my investigation is to understand the reciprocal influence between children's agency and language policy within family settings. This dynamic relationship can be effectively examined through ethnography, utilising a comprehensive analytical lens that captures the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon.

After explaining my reasons to employ ethnographic method above, I move on to discuss the methods used for data collection including why particularly those methods have been employed in my inquiry. Then, I provide information about my research design, discuss my reflexivity and positionality, and eventually share the ethical considerations in my research.

## **4.2 Research design**

### **4.2.1 Contact with families**

The study design includes four Turkish-speaking families with UK-born children and living in London. Families in this study have been selected from the parents who made explicit effort to maintain Turkish language by sending their children to complementary Turkish schools or providing them to take private tutors. Because of the fact that the families deliberate attempt to enrol their child in complementary schools or private lessons has been perceived as one of the explicit parental practices to promote and maintain their heritage language with their children, I mark this effort as a key criterion regarding narrowing my research sample.

To begin my study, I reached out to several managers of Turkish complementary schools in London, aiming to connect with Turkish-speaking families and identify students aged 5 to 12 who could participate. I also collaborated with the Educational Counsel Office of the Turkish Embassy in London, which funds my PhD program, to seek their assistance in locating families that met the study's criteria, particularly those actively maintaining their heritage language. To further engage potential participants, I shared announcements on social media platforms within London's Turkish communities. These posts outlined the project's purpose and objectives and provided my contact information for those interested in participating.

As a researcher who relocated to the UK a few years ago, with limited connections within the Turkish-speaking communities in London, I encountered certain challenges in reaching out to individuals and persuading them to partake in my study. However, drawing from insights gained during my MA study, I was aware that complementary Turkish schools served as hubs where parents engaged in social interactions within school

canteens while their children attended classes. As a result, in May 2019, I started visiting complementary Turkish schools across London to establish and broaden my network.

Among the complementary schools I visited, one was predominantly managed by members of the Cypriot Turkish community in North London. During my initial visit to the North London Turkish School, the principal introduced me as a researcher to a group of mothers and grandmothers gathered around a table in the school canteen while waiting for their children.

I took this opportunity to explain the ethical considerations of my study and address their questions about the research and my role as the researcher. Acknowledging the sensitivity involved in accessing people's private lives, I reassured the participants that their personal information, as well as any audio or video recordings, would be handled in strict compliance with ethical guidelines (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

#### **4.2.2 Participants**

This study involves the recruitment of four Turkish-speaking families, each with British-born children and distinct migration backgrounds. All participating grandparents originally migrated from either Turkey (n=2) or Northern Cyprus (n=2). The families that migrated from Turkey represent the second generation of immigrants, with the children born in Britain and the parents having resided in England for over 20 years. Conversely, the families from Northern Cyprus constitute the third generation of immigrants, with both parents and children born in the UK, and the grandparents having lived in England for more than 30 years. Given the consideration of children's ages and their school attendance, the age range for child participants is set between 5 and 12 years old.

To ensure confidentiality, all names have been changed, and I have deliberately refrained from providing precise details about the families' specific locations for the same purpose.

**Table 2.** Main Research Participants

**Emir’s Family**

Family	Children 1	Children 2	Children 3	The caregivers (parents, grandparents)	Complementary School/ Private Lessons	Grandparents
	Male/Female-Age	Male/Female-Age	Male/Female-Age			
<b>Emir’s Family</b>	Emir (M-9)	Seda* (F-6)	Ela* (F-6) *Twin girls	Originally Migrated from Turkey	North London Turkish School (NLTS)	The grandmother has been living with this family for six months every year since the twins were born.
<b>Arin’s Family</b>	Arin (M-12)	--	*Arin has 18 y-o sister, Evin who is not a participant of this study	Originally Migrated from Turkey (ethnically Kurdish)	North London Turkish School (NLTS)	This family does not have grandparents residing with them; instead, Arin's uncle lives there.
<b>Omer’s Family</b>	Omer (M-10)	Remzi (M-8)	Sevgi (F-5)	Originally Migrated from Cyprus	North London Turkish School (NLTS)	This family lives with the (maternal) grandparents.
<b>Asmin’s Family</b>	Asmin (F-10)	*Beyza (F-5)  *Beyza is the niece of Asmin, but Asmin’s mother looks after her.	---	Originally Migrated from Cyprus	North London Turkish School (NLTS)	Asmin’s mother (Ferda Hanım- 52 y-o) is also the grandmother of Elisa.

Emir’s Family resides in a diverse neighbourhood on the outskirts of North London. The family consists of Ali (father) and Yeliz (mother), both in their mid-40s and holding bachelor’s degrees, along with their three children: Emir, the oldest at 9 years old, and twin daughters, Ela and Seda, aged 6 during the research period. Ali and Yeliz are Turkish English bilinguals with a shared background in Alevism, a religious and cultural community within Islam that has faced systemic discrimination in Turkey. Their migration to the UK approximately 20 years ago was influenced by this marginalization,

and they noted that many of their extended family members had similarly sought better opportunities in Europe, particularly Germany.

The maternal grandmother, Ayse, who is in her mid-60s, plays a significant role in the family's life, spending six months each year with them in London and the other half in Turkey. During my face-to-face fieldwork, Ayse was in Turkey, but she returned to London just before the pandemic. Therefore, I could never meet her in face to face, instead I met her in one of remote (online) interviews with the family.

Both the mother and father were originally born in Turkey. All of their children were born and raised in the UK. When I started my fieldwork in 2019, it marked the first year the children of this family began attending a complementary Turkish school. The use of Turkish in the home, as well as its role in the children's everyday lives, was an important aspect of my study. Given that the parents had faced challenges in maintaining their heritage language, I expected potential tensions between the children's growing preference for English and their parents' efforts to maintain Turkish. These challenges were compounded by the pandemic, which shifted my data collection methods. Online interviews became an essential tool for continuing the research, despite the physical distance. While remote interviews allowed for continued access to the family, they also presented challenges in capturing the nuances of face-to-face interactions and the family's language practices in natural settings. Nevertheless, these interviews provided valuable insights into how the family adapted to the shifting dynamics of language use and family relationships during the pandemic.

For Emir's Family, I have gathered approximately three hours of recordings from face-to-face home visits before the pandemic (November 2019 - February 2020) and one and a half hours from online visits during the pandemic (August 2020 - June 2021). These recordings included my observations and interviews, capturing the dynamics within the family both at home and in the Turkish complementary school.

### **Arin's Family**

This family Bahar, a mother in her mid-40s, her son Arin (11 years old), and daughter Evin (18 years old). Bahar and her late husband, who passed away three years ago, identified as ethnically Kurdish and were bilingual in Kurdish and Turkish. They migrated to the UK approximately 25 years ago from the Southeastern region of Turkey, where

Kurdish was primarily spoken at home, but formal education was conducted in Turkish. Bahar did not have access to primary education due to socio-political challenges but later learned to read and write in Turkish independently.

The children were born and raised in North London. Arin has been attending Turkish language classes at a local complementary school for two years, whereas his sister Evin has not taken any formal Turkish classes. After her husband's passing, Bahar took over the family's Turkish food market in North London, supported by her brother Baran, who migrated to the UK to assist her. He now lives with the family, forming part of their household.

The children, Arin and Evin were born and raised in North London. While Arin had been attending Turkish language classes at the North London Turkish School for two years at that time, the daughter had not participated in any Turkish language classes. After the sudden loss of her husband, Bahar had to take over the small business (a Turkish food market) that her husband was running in North London. Therefore, she was mostly busy with the work, and we had to set my home visiting according to her tight schedule. There was Bahar's brother who was helping her with running the family business. He migrated to the UK from Turkey after her sister needed to run their food market and started to live with their home. Therefore, Arin's uncle was also the part of their nuclear family.

I contacted Bahar during a visit to the North London Turkish School, where we had an initial conversation about my research. While hesitant due to the potential political implications, Bahar agreed to participate after I reassured her of my focus on family language practices. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was only able to visit Arin's Family in person twice, with one additional online visit. While online visits were effective with other families, we had to suspend them with Arin's Family due to the severe impact of the pandemic on their lives. Arin's uncle was intubated during the first lockdown, and the family faced several challenges that required Bahar and Arin to focus their attention on these issues. Despite this, Arin was able to share some audio and video recordings from before the pandemic, which illustrated his daily interactions with his mother, sister, and uncle. These recordings provided valuable insights into family dynamics during a normal period.

For Arin's Family, the data analysed includes three home visits conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic, an audio recording of the Language Portrait interview with Arin (approximately 45 minutes), parental semi-structured interviews (around one hour), audio and video recordings provided by the family (about 35 minutes), as well as my observations and field notes from both face-to-face and online visits.

### **Omer's Family**

Omer's Family represents a multigenerational household where grandparents, parents, and children all reside under the same roof. The family unit comprises the [maternal] grandparents: Sevgi, the grandmother, and Omer, the grandfather, both in their 70s; the parents: Selen and Mehmet, both in their mid-30s; and the children: a 10-year-old son named Omer, an 8-year-old son named Remzi, and a 5-year-old daughter named Sevgi.

Originally from Northern Cyprus, the grandparents were born and raised there before migrating to England approximately 50 years ago. They are parents to six children, all of whom were born in the UK. Selen is the youngest of their children and had been married to Mehmet for twelve years at the time of data collection. Mehmet's parents also migrated to England from Northern Cyprus before his birth. As both Selen and Mehmet worked in full-time jobs, the responsibility of caring for the children fell upon the grandparents.

In addition to her full-time job, Selen dedicated her time to voluntary work at the canteen of the complementary school her children attended. She shared that this very school held personal significance, as it was the same school she herself attended during her primary school years.

For Omer's Family, the data analysed includes audio recordings of the Language Portrait interviews with Omer (approximately 35 minutes) and Remzi (around 26 minutes), parental semi-structured interviews (approximately 2 hours), the children's scrapbook projects (about 80 minutes), as well as my observations and field notes from both face-to-face and online home visits.

### **Asmin's Family**

This family consists of a mother, Ferda, in her early 50s, and a father, Mehmet, in his late 50s. Their youngest daughter, Asmin (10 years old) and their granddaughter Beyza (5 years old) are the main children participants in this study. Beyza's parents in their mid-

30's and like her mother, Beyza's father is also a Cypriot Turkish who was born and raised in London. Other than main participants, Ferda has a son in his 30s who is married to a Cypriot Turkish woman, with whom they have four children, a daughter (27 years old), and a son (25 years old). Asmin, her big sister and brother live with their parents in a 3-floor large house in Hackney where a large Turkish and Kurdish population are resident. Ferda and Mehmet were both born in Northern Cyprus and migrated to the UK 35 years ago, shortly after their marriage. With the exception of their 25 years old son, all their children attended the North London Turkish School during their primary school years. It was Asmin's first year in the complementary school when I started my fieldwork.

During one of my visits to the North London Turkish School, I connected with Ferda. She was a familiar face to me, often seen in the school canteen. Her eldest daughter's marriage to the son of the school principal, Nazan, had expanded Ferda's social circle considerably within the school community. Not only did she bring her 10-year-old daughter Asmin to the school, but she also shared caregiving responsibilities for her granddaughter Beyza (5 years old) with Nazan, both at the school and occasionally at home. This unique circumstance allowed me to observe her in the dual roles of both a mother and a grandmother simultaneously.

For Asmin's Family, I have gathered approximately two hours of recordings from face-to-face home visits before the pandemic (November 2019 - February 2020) and two and a half hours from online visits during the pandemic (August 2020 - June 2021). These recordings included my observations and interviews, capturing the dynamics within the family both at home and in the Turkish complementary school.

### **4.2.3 Stages of the Project**

Researchers conducting ethnographic research deal with a complex environment in the fieldwork. Blommaert and Jie (2010) advise to divide research into stages which will enable to reduce the complexities and make this process easier. Thereby, I have divided my research into three stages. In line with this advice, I have divided my research into three stages: pre-fieldwork, during fieldwork, and after fieldwork. Below, I expand on each of these stages in detail.

### **Stage 1: Pre-field work**

Prior to the research site, I have been building up general questions (foreshadowed problems) about my research topic in the light of my autobiography and the literature around the subject. In this stage, I was mainly dealing with the selection of families for my research project. Since research site in my MA dissertation was complementary Turkish schools in London, I was familiar with the concept of these schools and had contact information of some school principals. First, I sent the introductory e-mails to school principals explaining what my study is about, how I collect data, what are the criteria for participating this study and why I seek help from them in May 2019. Also, I asked for their permission to visit the schools -not for entering the classrooms but spending some time with families staying in the school canteen while their children were attending to the lessons for about three hours and attending the school assemblies such as Turkish national days celebrations.

Complementary schools are community-based organizations sustained by voluntary efforts, with school managers playing a pivotal role in organizing events and making decisions about the teaching of cultural heritage. These managers, as volunteers, hold significant positions within their communities and are often regarded as leaders. Consequently, I viewed the school managers as gatekeepers who facilitated my access to prospective participants by introducing me to families during my initial visits to the schools.

In addition to these visits, I attended several community events related to Turkish-speaking communities in London, such as barbecue gatherings, national day celebrations featuring cultural performances by children, and graduation ceremonies for students at complementary schools. These engagements gradually established my presence within the Turkish-speaking communities.

However, the summer school holidays posed a challenge, as many prospective participants travelled abroad, causing a temporary disruption in my connections. This delay extended until late September 2019, when families returned, and I could resume contact with some participants.

After gaining access to the families via complementary Turkish schools, I informed them about my research project and handed out the information sheets I prepared for parents

and children separately. Also, I made a short video clip for children participants to explain my research and attached the video's link into the information sheets via a scan code in order to get more attention from them by using some technological advances. Because my research involves human participants, ethical issues were considered from the initial stage carefully. I explained the ethical process of the research at great length and gave the families some time to consider participating in the study. Since my research includes children and parent participation in family home setting, I emphasised that the importance of willingness of all family members is crucial.

### **Stage 2: During field work**

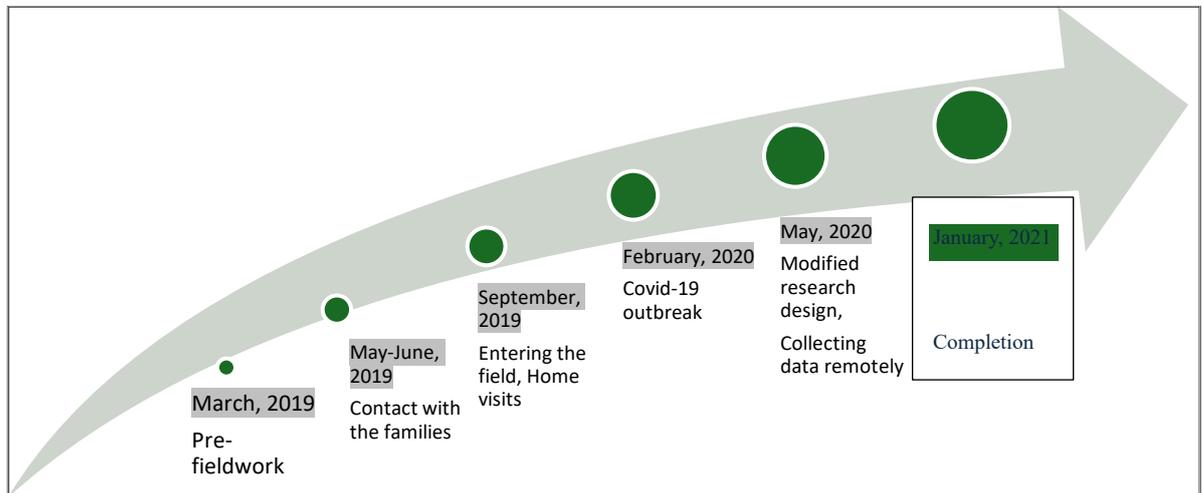
In this intermediate stage, I visited families and the North London Turkish School (NLTS) to collect a wide range of data. During home visits, I conducted audio-video recordings of family interactions during mealtimes, playtime, and homework sessions, capturing naturalistic conversations and routines in the family setting. I have managed to conduct the interviews both the children and the parent/grandparents during the first three months of my research in the field. I was well received in my participants home and we were establishing trust and rapport. However, there was a sudden and dramatic change in our lives just after the first weeks of 2020 when pandemic of coronavirus started. This outbreak did not only change our lives, but also re-shaped my research design, like many other researchers doing field work.

At the NLTS, I collected data during events attended by my child participants, such as New Year celebrations and national Turkish festivities. These observations included informal interactions among the children, their peers, and teachers. My fieldnotes complement the audio-video recordings, offering reflections on the context and dynamics of these activities.

Together, this data provides a rich tapestry of the children's language practices and social interactions across home and Turkish complementary school settings, facilitating a deeper understanding of their linguistic repertoires and family language policies.

The global outbreak of COVID-19 significantly impacted the execution of my PhD thesis, particularly with regards to the methodological aspects of my research. Initially, I had planned to conduct a series of face-to-face interviews and observations as part of my ethnographic study. However, due to the implementation of COVID-19 restrictions and

safety measures, I received an email from the university in March 2019 to stop my face-to-face data collection immediately following the regulation that the UK government released.

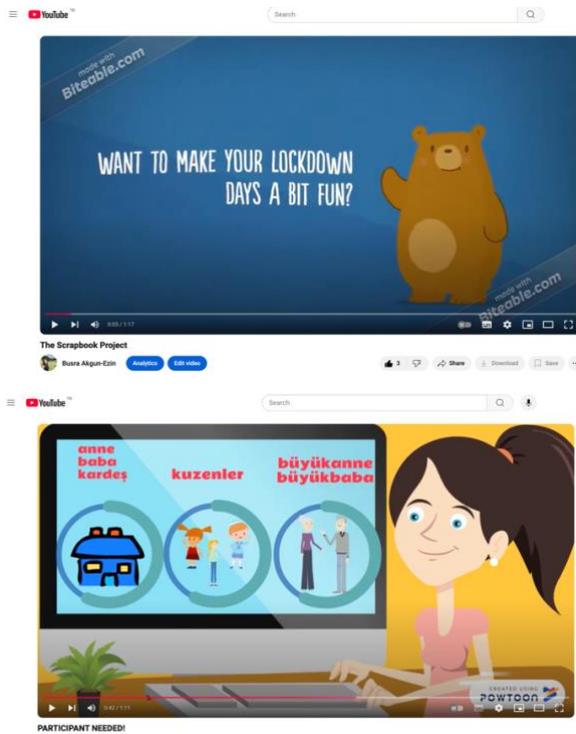


**Figure 5.** Timeline illustrating how my fieldwork interrupted by Covid pandemic.

This unexpected challenge required a swift adaptation of my research methodology to accommodate the new circumstances.

In response to the limitations posed by the pandemic, I made the decision to transition my data collection efforts from in-person interactions to online platforms. This involved leveraging digital tools and technology to continue gathering data remotely. While this shift introduced its own set of challenges, such as ensuring data authenticity, addressing potential biases, and maintaining rapport with participants, but it also brought about opportunities for exploring new dimensions of data collection and analysis. After modifying my research in response to the Covid pandemic restrictions, I contacted my participant families to determine whether they were comfortable with continuing data collection remotely for a period of time, while assuring them that I would return for face-to-face interactions if the restrictions eased during the data collection process. Another thing I needed to consider was whether the families can access to the Internet and digital devices, e.g., laptops, mobile phones for this remote data collection. Since the children-participants were attending their mainstream and complementary schools online, some parents/grandparents shared their concern about the children's extensive screen time exposure and required shorter online (home) visit than face-to-face ones. In response, I

dedicated efforts towards condensing my conversations with the children and meticulously scheduled our meetings to align with the families' preferred timings. Methodologically, I employed scrapbooks (see 4.4.5. Scrapbooks in this chapter) to gather data on children's language preferences, ideologies and linguistic repertoires. Considering the parent's request about screen timing, I left the management of scrapbook data collection to the parents instead of explaining the task to the children in detail. Yet, I prepared another video clips for scrapbook data collection explaining what I expect in simple terms and asked parents to watch the video with children. Then, I conducted online interviews with the children where we talked about their post products.



**Figure 6.** Screenshots from the videos created to promote participation in the study and introduce the scrapbooks project.

By conducting online interviews and observations, I sought to preserve the essence of my ethnographic study while also acknowledging the altered research landscape imposed by the pandemic. The modified approach allowed for continued engagement with participants, enabling the exploration of their experiences and perspectives, albeit within the context of the digital realm.

This shift to digital methods required sensitivity to the balance between children's participation and potential burdens, such as increased screen time. To address this, I

carefully coordinated shorter, focused online sessions with families, based on their preferences and availability. While this required flexibility, it also ensured that participation remained a positive and manageable experience, tailored to the unique challenges of a pandemic context.

As Cuevas-Parra (2020) argues, crises such as the pandemic underscore the need for researchers to navigate the tensions between protecting children and respecting their right to participate. By centring their perspectives and creating inclusive, flexible research methods, it is possible to foster a sense of agency and competence among children. This aligns with the principles of participatory research, where children are valued not just as subjects of study but as co-researchers capable of providing meaningful insights into their lives.

The challenges of transitioning to remote research further emphasised the importance of flexibility in child-centred methodologies. While face-to-face ethnographic methods allow for nuanced, embodied interactions, online approaches revealed new possibilities for accessibility and inclusivity. For instance, the digital format enabled asynchronous participation through scrapbooks and recorded reflections, which allowed children to contribute in ways that fit their routines and emotional comfort. These adaptations echo Cuevas-Parra's emphasis on the value of flexible, contextually responsive approaches to children's participation, even under challenging circumstances.

Therefore, the unforeseen impact of COVID-19 necessitated an adaptation of my research methodology, transitioning from traditional face-to-face methods to a hybrid approach that combined online data collection techniques. This adaptation not only demonstrates the flexibility of research practices in response to unforeseen circumstances but also highlights the ongoing evolution of research methods within an increasingly digital landscape.

### **Stage 3: After fieldwork**

All interactions presented in the excerpts were audio or video recorded and transcribed verbatim, following a transcription style that includes specific conventions such as pauses, laughter, and rising intonation. The original quotes from the parental and grandparental interview data, conducted mostly in Turkish, were translated into English

by the researcher and subsequently reviewed by a second Turkish-English bilingual speaker for accuracy. Likewise, the selected Kurdish (Kurmanji) data was transcribed by a Kurdish multilingual colleague proficient in Kurdish, Turkish, and English.

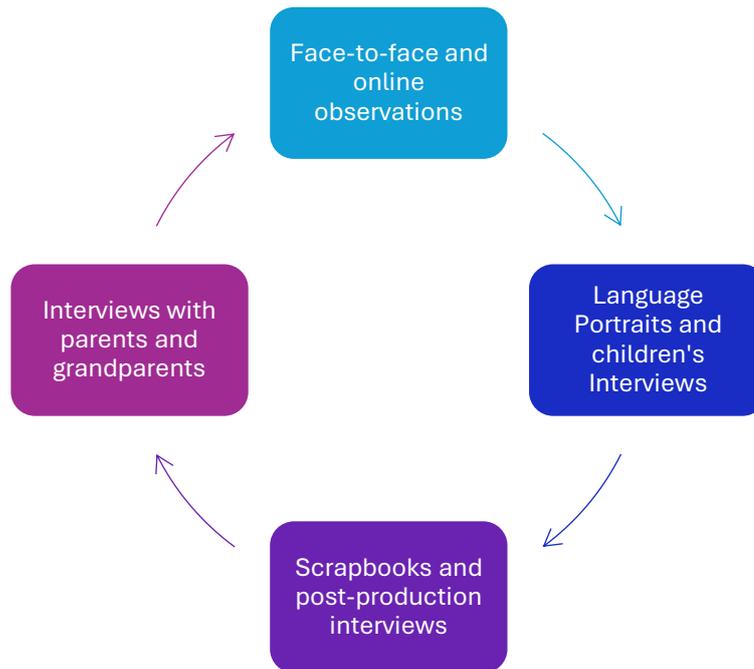
Only selected excerpts were transcribed based on their thematic relevance to my research questions, prioritising instances that illustrate language use, children's agency, and family language policies. The excerpts represent interactions across home conversations, complementary school settings, and semi-structured interviews, ensuring a balanced and contextualised analysis.

I followed a verbatim transcription style, incorporating conventions such as double parentheses for transcriber's comments ((words)), dashes for unfinished utterances (-), exclamation marks for rising intonation (!), and dots for silences.

Meanwhile, I kept in touch with my participants if I needed any clarification on the data, except Arin's family, as explained in Section 3.2. I revisited my notes and repeatedly watched/listened to the recordings to ensure an accurate interpretation of the data.

### **4.3 Methods for Data Collection**

In the following, I explain the ways in which I collected the data through observations, semi-structured interviews, fieldnotes and other documentary data.



**Figure 7.** The iterative model of data collection and data analysis.

### 4.3.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation is the main data collection method in ethnographic research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) which distinguishes ethnography from the other qualitative research designs (Selleck, 2012). To understand the social situations in various levels and different times and places, ethnographers do observations in terms of gaining the first-hand experience in natural settings of the participants. Participating in the context of my study indicates my active involvement in the research participants' social life around the language(s) they use.

The varying degree of participation has been discussed by many researchers (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Junker, 1960; Spradley, 2016). Curdt-Christiansen (2019) suggests that the researchers should have a flexible stance but also should be familiar with the pre-existing research in the literature before entering the field. This prevents the researcher from imposing his/her own ideas in the process. According to Powdermaker (1966, p. 9): "Involvement is necessary to understand the psychological realities of a culture, that is, its meanings for the indigenous members. Detachment is necessary to construct the abstract reality". Building upon this, I could position myself in

this discourse by embodying both roles as a 'simultaneous insider-outsider'. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The term 'simultaneous insider-outsider' refers to the researcher's unique dual positionality in the research process, which involves being both an insider, who possesses a deep and empathetic understanding of the cultural context being studied, and an outsider, who maintains an objective distance to critically analyse and interpret that context. As an insider, I gain first-hand experience by immersing myself in the Turkish-speaking communities in London. My researcher identity grants me access to intimate knowledge, perceptions, and nuances that might not be readily apparent to external observers. Conversely, I also assume an outsider role, maintaining some degree of detachment to prevent biases or assumptions from clouding my analysis. This allows for a more objective evaluation of the data, encouraging a critical examination of the observed phenomena and interpretations.

By embodying both roles simultaneously, I combine the benefits of familiarity and objectivity. This approach acknowledges the complexity of the research context and strives to balance personal immersion with rigorous analysis. The simultaneous insider-outsider stance enables a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the studied culture or community, while still maintaining a scholarly and critical perspective.

Since the observations in ethnographic research follow a systematic way of exercise, Curdt-Christiansen (2019) discussed the essential features of the observations as a) the actual physical setting (place), b) the people involved (social actors), c) the languages used in interaction (interactions), d) the routines, activities, rituals associated with the language (sequence) and e) the strategically chosen period for observation (time). In my inquiry, the participant observations mainly carried out in the family homes (place) along with the complementary school canteens, with the participation of the children, their parents and grandparents (social actors).

The languages used in interactions during my observations were occasionally in Turkish (standard, Cypriot), English, and Kurdish in some events (interactions). Moreover, I strategically chose the family gathering activities such as playtimes, dinner conversations at home to observe more interactions among family members and the culture-related celebrations at complementary school settings to observe the multilingual and multicultural environment (time and sequence).

Aligned with Holmes et al. (2013), I approached these observations with a multilingual lens, emphasising the dynamic and negotiated nature of language use in research contexts. Researching multilingually involves critically engaging with the complexities of language as both a methodological tool and a site of meaning-making. I recognised family homes and complementary schools as multilingual spaces where multiple languages coexisted and were dynamically negotiated. Those settings served as rich multilingual spaces where language use was shaped by cultural norms, generational dynamics, and situational contexts. By observing interactions in these settings, I documented how participants used language fluidly to navigate familial roles and cultural affiliations. Throughout the observation process, I reflected on my linguistic positioning and its impact on data collection. By alternating between Turkish, rarely Kurdish as I have a very limited knowledge of this language and English to engage with participants, I ensured inclusivity and sought to minimise potential power imbalances, a key consideration in multilingual research.

Participant observation enables the researchers to access not only to different domains of language use but also to other data around the language use such as the participants' experiences, relationships and interactions with those languages. Employing this method has been crucial for my study to uncover the language practices negotiated at home, in particular of the children's interactions with other family members which can be hidden and very different from what the participants say they do. My intention of both understanding the complexity of these relationships and rethinking of my assumptions during the observation process which may derive from my own cultural background (Campbell & Lassiter, 2014). I have adopted a more participant role than observer one during my home visits. It was because either the children were being very active, playing with me or I was providing help to parents on some occasions (helping the children's homework, setting dinner table etc.).

### **4.3.2 Fieldnotes**

Fieldnotes serve as a method for recording participant observations. In the research site, there are many specific actions or reactions occur in terms of serving to catch the dynamics of the research situation. There are no common rules or a style of taking fieldnotes since every research site has its own unique nature. However, it is suggested to

type them up immediately upon returning from the fieldwork. As recommended for interviews and focus groups (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018), I promptly documented my field notes after leaving the location to prevent crucial details from fading. As I mentioned above, I adopted a more participatory approach at my observations which make the long-length or detailed entries difficult while I am at the research site. Thus, I had been jotting down the key words and jottings of remarkable occurrences (in the language of that situation) of the participants around me at my home visits. I predominantly used pen and paper, which were chosen for their convenience and unobtrusiveness. However, during natural conversations with participants, I resorted to audio or video recording to avoid disrupting the flow that writing notes might cause.

After returning home, I typed up the expanded and refined version of my reflections and interpretations of specific actions and reactions I had experienced during observations. Drawing on the framework of descriptive fieldnotes, as outlined by Emerson et al. (2011), I incorporated personal reflections on my learning process, speculations, emotions, challenges, ideas, biases, analyses, and intentions for future inquiries. I initially wrote my fieldnotes entirely in Turkish because expressing my feelings and reflections in my mother tongue allowed for greater nuance and authenticity. Afterward, I revisited these notes, reorganized certain sections, and rewrote them in English. This process of writing in Turkish and subsequently translating into English took additional time but significantly enriched the depth and authenticity of my analysis. As Holmes et al. (2013) note, multilingual research often demands extra labour but ultimately yields deeper insights into the data.

It is because I aim to openly share my reflective processes in my fieldnotes, paying attention to my own role in shaping the data collection process as well as considering how my questions, demeanour, and presence may impact participants' response (Billups, 2019). Engaging in self-reflection to understand my own biases, assumptions, and personal influences on the data I collected and the interpretations I made, it was crucial to provide a balanced view of the research findings.

### **4.3.3 Interviews**

Alongside the participant observation and fieldnotes, ethnographers apply other methods to collect data. Ruby emphasised that “Participant observation often employs the

unstructured interview as a routine part of its practice. These two methods are compatible: observation guides researchers to some of the important questions they want to ask the respondent, and interviewing helps to interpret the significance of what researchers are observing” (Ruby, 2012, p. 149).

Ethnographers employ interviews to support what they have learned through the data gathered from participant observation and informal conversations. The qualitative interview does not only allow people to describe their experiences in their own terms but also helps to develop the interactional exchange of dialogue between the researcher and the researched during the process. This method also provides “a thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative approach where the researcher has topics, themes or issues they wish to cover, but with a fluid and flexible structure” (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 3). In my study, I employ semi-structured interview with the parent and the grandparent participants, and ‘language portraits’ as an additional tool to semi-structured interviews with the children participants.

#### **4.3.3.1 Language Portraits**

Children respond to the world differently than adults (Bollig & Kelle, 2016; Gallagher, 2019). This differentiation has been much of the debates that highlight the unequal relationship between the child participant and the adult researcher in social sciences. Dockett et al. (2011) outline a theoretical framework that incorporates focus on children’s agency, visibility, rights, as well as ethical symmetry. Using this framework, they describe a process of matching methodology and methods, with the aim of ensuring that the choice and implementation of methods provide opportunities for children to exercise choice, provide informed assent, engage in the research processes (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2015). As previously mentioned, an essential aspect that has gained attention among Family Language Policy (FLP) researchers is the necessity of including children’s viewpoints in the data (Fogle & King, 2013; Melo-Pfeifer, 2015; Schwartz & Verschik, 2013). The scarcity of information regarding children’s perspectives can be attributed to the challenges associated with utilising traditional methods like surveys and semi-structured interviews with young participants. Consequently, a handful of researchers have suggested employing more innovative tools that align with the environments and activities familiar to children. For instance, Lytra et al. (2016) contributed the studies of

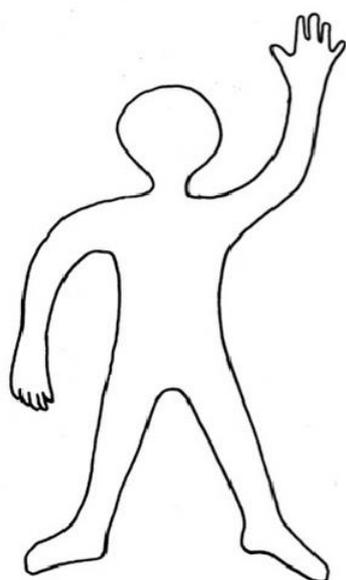
children's multilingual and multiliterate practices with the use of scrapbooks which provides children to develop their own agency through text-making. Additionally, in Melo-Pfeifer's study (2015), the Portuguese-German children effectively conveyed their bilingual experiences and the concept of translanguaging through their drawings. Therefore, the recent developments in the research with children provide more child-friendly methodologies.

One of the research tools which is sensitive to the children's voice and agency is language portrait technique. Language portraits (graphic visualisations of the linguistic repertoire using the outline of a body silhouette) help participants to visualise and interpret their linguistic repertoire by filling the whole-body silhouettes. Busch (2018, p.1) emphasises that "by providing a body image, body portraits offer the possibility of reflecting on one's communicative repertoire both from the 'inner' perspective of the experiencing subject-body as well as from an 'external' perspective on the object-body". Language portraits as one of the visual methods offer children the alternative way of constructing knowledge.

Language Portraits (henceforth LP) have been used to gain insight about people's bodily and emotional language experiences in everyday linguistic practices, "or of ideologically informed ideas about, of attitudes to, and of stance taking towards particular languages or modes of speaking" (Busch, 2018, p. 4)

One of the advantages of employing language portraits is that LP allows the researchers to investigate the linguistic repertoire of the participant from his/her perspective by eliciting a visual and linguistic first-person narrative. This also helps the researchers to see languages as embodied, experienced and historically lived (Busch, 2017; Kusters & De Meulder, 2019). Busch (2012) explains the concept of linguistic repertoire as "a hypothetical structure, which evolves by experiencing language in interaction on a cognitive and on an emotional level and is inscribed into corporal memory" (p. 521). This corporal memory is represented in LP with the body silhouettes where the participants draw and colour the body image in order to represent their language attitudes, emotional aspects and stance taking towards particular languages or modes of speaking. Since there is a combination of drawing/colouring with narrative, LP has been called a multimodal research method" (Busch, 2018b; Kusters & De Meulder, 2019).

LP can be described as an empty, gender-free whole-body silhouettes which research participants colour or draw languages, language varieties, the particular ways of speaking (see Figure 1 for an example of an empty silhouette). The research participants create narratives (verbal or written) by explaining or commenting on what they draw and/or colour on the portrait. LP, as a research tool, was initially employed in the research of language awareness in multilingual migrant children in Germany (Krumm & Jenkins, 2001). This study illustrated how language portraits helped children from minority/immigrant communities to express their emotion and feelings tied to their language use. Following that, there has been a growing interest in the use of LP for two decades in different contexts including family language policy (Obojska & Purkarthofer, 2018), indigenous language groups in Australia (Singer & Harris, 2016), foreign language teaching (Wolf, 2014), and bi/multilingual deaf communities (Krausneker, 2004; Kusters & De Meulder, 2019). Busch (2012) also employed the LP to reveal how a German-French bilingual adult brought different discursive strategies linked to the practices of these languages into play.



**Figure 8.** Template for the drawing of language portraits<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Downloaded from <http://heteroglossia.net/Sprachportraet.123.0.html>

I employ the LP as part of my ethnographic study exploring the language practices, choices, motivations for language choices and language ideologies of the children from Turkish-speaking families in London. With the use of LP, I investigate what my participants think about the languages they use now, used in the past or willing to use in the future, how their agency appears in their use of these languages, how they associated their language(s) use and the way(s) of speaking with specific persons or places and how they feel about them; which colour they would attribute to the different languages or modalities and which part of the body they associated with them. Using the data from the LP, I address the following question: How do children negotiate languages and identities and enact their agency (as ‘the socioculturally-mediated capacity to act’) (Ahearn, 2001) through language use. Although this multimodal method offers insightful data, it should be considered that these are the verbal and visual representations of the participants produced in a frame (the silhouette, prompts for drawing, colouring and commenting etc.) during the research process in a specific interactional situation (researcher-participant interaction). Busch (2012, p. 9) reminds us “we do not consider them an image of the linguistic repertoire ‘the way it really is’, nor as an ‘objective’ reconstruction of the history of language acquisition. Selection, interpretation, and evaluation take place in the visual mode as much as in the verbal mode, and representation and reconstruction do not occur independently of social discourses”. Since the framing of the language portraits has also impact on the obtained data, I aimed to use the more open prompt in the invitation to produce LP by avoiding to say, ‘choose a different colour for each language’ and I used ‘languages and ways of speaking’ instead. Thus, I have adopted the following prompt from (Busch, 2018b) in my project:

“This is your body. Think of all the languages and ways of speaking that are important in your life. Pick a colour for each of these languages and modes of speaking which have a particular meaning for you. For this, you may either use the silhouette provided (as a print copy or digital version on a tablet) or draw one for yourself in the provided blank page and you may draw inside and outside of the figure”.

Busch, in her works (Busch, 2012, 2017, 2021), consistently argues that linguistic repertoires should not be viewed as simply residing within the individual speaker, nor as solely shaped by specific time-space contexts governed by established norms and

expectations, nor as merely emerging from individual interactional events. Rather, she conceptualises repertoires as occupying an intermediate, mediating position. This position bridges the gap between interactions rooted in time and space, the often-conflicting discourses on linguistic appropriateness, and the emotionally and bodily lived experiences of language by individuals. This aligns with my approach, where I use Language Portraits (LP) to capture the bodily experience of language and complement this with observations and interviews to explore linguistic ideologies and practices in context. To further explore how embodied experiences and culturally recognised discourses influence the repertoires used in social interactions, Busch introduces the concept of body image within the framework of Language Portraits (Busch, 2021).

The recent emphasis on the role of bodies and emotions in sociolinguistic, conversation analysis, and discourse analysis research is tied to a broader understanding of meaning-making as a cooperative, dialogical process that spans across various modes and sign systems, including the use of objects and spatial arrangements (Ros i Solé, 2024). Despite this, as Bucholtz and Hall (2016) point out, contemporary sociocultural linguistics lacks an extensive discussion on the theoretical relationship between language and embodiment.

In these dialogical processes, bodies and emotions function as crucial resources that individuals draw upon to create and interpret meaning. The concept of body image, in this context, can be seen as an imagined, emotionally charged representation of one's body in relation to others. This body image begins to develop in early childhood, forming a largely unnoticed but constantly evolving matrix that adheres to individuals. It allows them to conceive of themselves with a sense of biographical continuity and coherence, influencing how they engage with language and interact within their social worlds (Busch, 2021). When people communicate, they bring with them their life experiences, including emotional and physical experiences with language. These experiences shape how they use and evaluate their communicative abilities in different situations. The idea of a 'body image' helps explain how these personal resources are not just tools they 'have,' but are influenced by past emotional experiences and societal beliefs about language. This body image plays a role in how individuals navigate possibilities and limitations in their communication.

The body image used in this study (see Figure 1) implies a dynamic posture with the different positions of the two arms. There are also no details (such as eyes, ears, mouth) added in order to give space for the participants to design their own elements during the LP interview. Schulz (2005) considers the body image as “an important reference point in pictorial representations, because it is an interface between the inner and outer world, between subjects who see pictures and, in turn, objects that are seen as pictures” (as cited in Busch, 2018b, p. 9). This body silhouette is used as a metaphorical tool for reflecting on one’s language experiences. Metaphors, deeply connected to our bodily experiences, help us make sense of complex ideas (Botsis & Bradbury, 2018). In this context, the silhouette allows participants to think about their language use and emotions in a structured way. By using metaphors like ‘family language’ or ‘love language’ participants can express their feelings and explore how different languages and experiences shape their identity and interactions (Obojska, 2019). This metaphorical approach highlights the connection between language, emotions, and power dynamics.

In my study, I analyse the body image according to these metaphors structured by the participants. The metaphors can be structured through the drawings/colourings of the body parts, and from the spatial representation of the body. Structuring according to the parts of the body may refer to common metaphors such as the head as the place of reason, the belly as the place of emotions, the heart as the location of intimacy and the hand as the site of social activity (Busch, 2018). The spatial structuring may indicate the languages being familiar/unfamiliar or important/less important, according to their positions such as above /below, large/small. Nonetheless, there are no certain and valid rules for analysing language portraits alone. However, the metaphors would be meaningful when they are combined with the narratives of participants.

Language portraits provide various kinds of interpretations regarding colours choice of the participants. Their choices can be associated with a symbolic, emotional, socio-cultural or experiential value, or, in other cases, it can be simply related to personal preferences, such as favourite colours. Therefore, the participant’s account plays an important role for meaning making of why a particular colour is chosen by him/her. In the recent mixed method study Soares et al. (2020) conducted 570 LP with multilingual children and distinguished recurring patterns in the colour choice and placement of languages in their portraits.

#### **4.3.3.2 Semi-structured interview**

Ethnographers are inclined to avoid adopting pre-existing questionnaires before immersing themselves in the field. This preference leads them to frequently employ semi-structured interviews -a method commonly employed within ethnographic work. Semi-structured interviews provide a middle ground between complete formality and pure informality, allowing for a certain level of flexibility while still maintaining some key points of inquiry. This method aligns with the ethnographer's role as a research instrument, allowing them to engage deeply and authentically with participants, adapt their approach based on emerging insights, and pursue unexpected avenues of exploration (Wolcott, 1967). Semi-structured interviews foster a comfortable atmosphere where participants feel more at ease sharing their experiences, perspectives, and personal stories. This balance between structure and flexibility characterises the dynamic nature of ethnographic research, allowing for rich, contextual insights to emerge and be meaningfully woven into the broader narrative of the study (Reeves et al., 2008).

I aim to analyse the family as a dynamic unit, with children placed in the center but the parental experiences, expectations, language use, and overt and covert language policies play an important role in considering the construction and maintenance of FLP. By employing the interview to the parents and the grandparents, I, therefore aim to reveal their personal insights about the language ecologies, practices, and management negotiated at home with their children. These interviews have not been occurred in very formal settings. Very often, the parental interviews took place at afternoon tea times or the dinner tables as if the parents and I were having regular informal conversations. However, these interviews were not entirely informal. I had a set of questions have been employed to explore the following issues: sociolinguistic background, family members' ages, jobs, leisure activities, language(s) use at home, language and identity and links between complementary and mainstream schools, language attitudes, family language policies, the importance of maintaining heritage language, family's contact with relatives and broader British society, the value of multilingualism, and their children's multilingual development.

#### **4.3.4 Audio/Video Recordings**

Audio and video recordings provide rich data in terms of illustrating how interactions occur between interlocutors. In my research context, I use audio and video recordings as research tools to capture how grandparents, parents and children jointly negotiate and construct values, practices around language(s) and how their agency has appeared in the discourse of their everyday activities. The audio/video recordings in this study come in two different forms. First, I asked the participant adults (both the parents and grandparents) to record anything that they believe encapsulates their day-to-day experiences with 'language' as a family by using either audio or video recordings with their own mobile. By not limiting the activity that the adults may prefer to record, I aim to give them more control over to navigate what has been sent through since the family homes are very private and sensitive settings. Instead, I explained them what kind of home gathering activities, or what specific context of their interactions would provide a better understanding of the nature of their everyday communication. The activities that better encapsulates their daily communications are ranging from, for instance, dinner table talks, doing homework, to the children's play with their siblings, audio/video calling of extended family members, celebrations such as birthday parties. Additionally, uploading their recording and sending them to me gave the opportunity to the family members to listen back to the recordings and ask any part to be deleted if they want to. The recordings were sent through via WhatsApp or e-mail (if the recording is long).

The second form of the recording data is my own recordings from the family home visits and online video recordings after I had to stop face to face visiting sessions and modify my visits to online meetings with the families as response to Covid-19 restrictions. In those recordings, I, as the researcher, asked the family members to reflect on their language experiences through parental interviews, language portraits and scrapbooks.

One of the advantages of the recording data is that it allows the researcher to review them whenever and how many times s/he wishes to do. Thus, the researcher can go back and view the data and find some other hidden and overlooked subjects. To collect the interactional data, I have arranged regular home visits, which are scheduled at mutually agreed times with the participant parents. As the family is a very private unit of society, I have informed my participants for my every attempt to start recordings during my presence at their homes even though I initially received their consent before they decided to participate in my research.

### 4.3.5 Scrapbooks

Scrapbooks are the notebooks that children create to write their thoughts, feelings, stories (language and literacy practices), to attach their selection of the photographs, drawings and artworks (self-presentation and agency), then talk about this text-making related to a social phenomenon. They have been used as text-making practices in visual research for providing children “a discursive space where they could select, record, reflect upon and share with researchers aspects of their language and literacy learning experiences, their faith experiences and aspects of the identities that mattered to them” (Lytra et al., 2017, p. 216). This discursive space could contribute to the children’s expressions and reflections of identity, agency and language use via both text and talk in a creative and child-friendly context. Since the literacy practices shape the unconscious processes of linguistic and cultural transmission in multilingual families (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020), the use of scrapbooks could provide the fruitful data of children’s covert language use. Thus, I aim to explore insightful data by employing this method. As I discussed in the Language Portrait section, this form of visual methods enables children’s visibility at a higher level.

Scrapbooks in this study have been employed to record children’s verbal and visual self-representation about their languages and identities. As I mentioned in 3.3 (Stages of the project), my fieldwork was interrupted by the global Covid-19 pandemic, and I redesigned my research methodology. I introduce scrapbooks because of the social distancing measures due to Covid-19, I had created a short video to explain the details of my scrapbook project and sent it to the participant families by adding that I am going to visit them in online meeting when children complete their work, and we will talk about their material page by page. I encouraged them to share their beliefs, choices, and practices about their languages. This recording is collected remotely through a video call due to the coronavirus pandemic. I sent each participant child an A4 size scrapbook ordering online to their home address and asked them to write, draw and stick in it what they considered important about their languages, and they wanted to share with me, the researcher.

One of the advantages emphasised by Lytra et al. (2017) is that this tool plays significant role by utilising visual methods of depiction, like photography or drawings, especially when engaging with younger children who might be in the initial phases of their literacy development, as was the case for certain participants in my study.

The integration of scrapbooks into my research enriches ongoing methodological debates within the study of multilingualism research with children. The use of scrapbooks offers children to exercise their own agencies through these text-making practices which enable them to shape their understanding, represent experiences, and navigate their environments. In addition to this, Lytra et al. (2017) highlight that employing scrapbooks also encourages the development of collaborative relationships and establishes a basis of trust between researchers and participants.

#### **4.3.6 Other Documentary Data**

Ethnographic research allows the researcher to employ a variety of methods for data collection. Apart from the methods mentioned above, I have been collecting photographs from the families' home, the children's performances at school assemblies, and the artworks that created by the children specifically for this study. Incorporating photographs, performances, and artworks adds a visual dimension to the research. These visual artifacts capture aspects of the participants' lives that might be challenging to express solely through written or spoken accounts. These creative outputs offer an unfiltered glimpse into their viewpoints, allowing us to access their understandings and emotions in a way that words alone might not convey. The arrangement of objects in a home, the themes of children's artwork, and the nature of school performances may carry cultural meaning that enriches our understanding of their lives.

#### **4.4 Methods of Data Analysis**

This study employs discourse analysis to delve into the underlying ideologies of children through their acts of agency, as well as to assess their impact on caregiver language practices and their role in shaping family language policies. By adopting discourse analysis to the conversational excerpts in the data analysis chapter, my emphasis lies on delving into the intricate nuances of the conversation while establishing connections with

my understanding of the family's broader language usage and their interactions within the sociocultural environment they inhabit.

Discourse analysis in ethnographic research uncovers intricate nuances of language use within particular cultural settings. This analytical approach provides insights into the intricate interplay between language, social practices, identities, and power dynamics, ultimately enhancing our comprehension of the community under study.

In my ethnographic approach, I analysed parental semi-structured interviews by interpreting them within the broader context of family interactions, migration experiences, and language practices. I focused on the narratives as they unfold, considering how parents construct their experiences and position themselves within their linguistic and cultural environments. This analysis is enriched by participant observations and fieldnotes, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of language use and family dynamics in everyday life.

I collected and analysed information from various sources, such as observations, interviews, post-production of language portraits and scrapbooks. By comparing and contrasting findings from different data sources or methods, I identified patterns, inconsistencies, or converging evidence that provide a more comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of my research topic. To enhance the reliability and validity of my findings, I incorporated multiple sources of data and diverse research methods. This approach allowed me to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, minimising the potential biases, errors, or limitations that could arise from relying on a single data source or research method.

#### **4.4.1 Researcher Positionality**

I consider my positionality as it should be rather fluid and dynamic than fixed, and thus I need to reflect on my own position on moment-to-moment basis. The similarities and the differences between the researcher and the researched imply that the positioning of the researcher might not necessarily be a static one as Mullings (1999) remind us of the researcher can be 'insiders, outsiders, both and neither'. For instance, Martin and J. Stuart-Smith (1997) pointed out that language competency is explicitly perceived as a marker of 'insiderness'. So that, I am an insider to my participants in this sense as I am a native 'standard' Turkish speaker; however, this 'standard' dialect of Turkish language

might switch my position to an outsider since not all my participants speak the same dialect of Turkish (the two participant families are originally from N. Cyprus who speak Cypriot Turkish, the ethnically Kurdish family speaks with Kurdish accent). Nevertheless, I am relatively familiar with the family settings, cultural and societal practices of my participants, which I believe have been an advantage in terms of understanding and interpreting their situations when it is compared to a non-Turkish heritage researcher. Simultaneously, my position is partly outsider since my participants' parents have been living in England for at least 20 years and all participant children were British-born whereas I have been living in England for only four years, and I am not familiar with the dominant culture of this country as much as they are. Also, my participants have been engaging with both mainstream (British) and minority (Turkish-speaking) communities in the UK for a long time as well as the children have been raised in a multicultural environment. As a female researcher engaging in ethnographic research and conducting visits to family residences, I have encountered the distinct impact of my gender identity on my interactions, particularly when seeking access to fathers and grandfathers. While I possess an understanding of the cultural backdrop within which these families operate, it's crucial to acknowledge the presence of socio-cultural constraints that also shape these dynamics. According to Pink (2007), researchers should maintain a heightened awareness of the various components of their identities that influence the research process. Elements such as gender, age, ethnicity, class, and race are crucial in shaping how researchers position themselves within ethnographic contexts. Ethnographers must demonstrate a self-awareness in terms of how they present themselves to the individuals they are studying, while also recognising the ways in which their identities are constructed and interpreted by their research subjects. These subjective perceptions can potentially impact the knowledge generated through the ethnographic interaction between the researcher and the participants.

In this context, the gender of the researcher emerged as a significant consideration. My fieldwork involved collaborating with mainly Turkish-speaking Muslim families, my gender identity took on added significance due to religious and cultural factors. The multifaceted role of being a woman and a researcher is crucial when engaging with research participants, as it carries implications that extend beyond mere academic inquiry and intertwines with personal and communal dynamics (Warren & Hackney, 2000). I

believe my gender played a significant role in facilitating access to the families in my study, as mothers were predominantly responsible for decision-making within the household. This aligns with the reflections of Yilmaz (2016), who noted that her gender as a woman working with multilingual Kurdish speakers of Turkey in the UK helped her build rapport and access informants, particularly since the majority of her respondents were women. Similarly, Ruby (2015) highlighted that being a female researcher working with Muslim families in the UK gave her a distinct advantage, as cultural and religious norms often limit interactions with male researchers, particularly in private home environments. However, as Ruby (2015) points out that shared gender or cultural background automatically provides full access to participants' experiences or insights. This highlights the need for researchers to remain reflexive and aware of potential biases. Following their example, I took care to inform my participants about the research process, addressed their questions openly, and ensured that ethical considerations were maintained throughout, particularly in managing sensitive information.

#### **4.4.2 Reflexivity**

Researchers cannot be separated from the social context that they made the centre of their study. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 15) state that “the concept of reflexivity acknowledges that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them”. Every decision made by the researcher in order to clarify epistemological, methodological and analytical decisions in ethnographic research is highly attached to his/her own perspective, interest and capacity. So that, ethnographic research itself a subjective interpretation of what the researcher has been able to observe (Wei, 2019). Therefore, methodological reflexivity is vital to the research process, since there are no prescribed recipes for using particular methods and tools for data collection and analysis (Patiño-Santos, 2020). Each research study is unique, influenced by its specific research question, participant characteristics, cultural context, and overall goals. Taking into account the nuances of my study's dynamics, I argue that this approach prevents the use of methods as rigid templates and encourages me as the researcher to be adaptable and attentive to the complexities inherent in the research field. In fact, my integration of methodological reflexivity played a pivotal role in facilitating a swift response to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic during the data collection phase.

The research landscape is diverse and dynamic, requiring researchers to thoughtfully and critically assess their methods' suitability, effectiveness, and ethical implications based on the distinct characteristics of their study. Conducting such research that sensitive to the minorities and their invisibility in the dominant culture was one of my driving forces when I started my study. I was then, assuming that my research will give 'voice' to those who unheard for a long time. However, I quickly realised that this 'voice' is not separable from my representation and construction -as well as my limitations- of it. Therefore, I understood that my role as researcher and reporter of other's voice put me in a position where power relations should be negotiated between me and the researched research participants in order to establish collaborative relationships with them. After that awareness, I began to search, for example child-friendly methods which provide more equal relationships in this context. Apart from that, I faced some challenges in the research site with my participant-observer role. As I investigate children's agency in FLP's of Turkish speaking communities, it was crucial for me to observe both parents interacting with the children at home settings. However, I could not observe this kind of interaction with the fathers of my two participant families as my gender (I assume) prevent them to stay with us at the time I spent in their houses. Then, I realised that it was not only me making assumptions about the researched group, but there are also their assumptions about me. Initially, I assumed that all parents, regardless of gender, would be equally present and engaged during my observations. However, I realised that my presence as a female researcher influenced the dynamics of the household in ways I had not anticipated. At the same time, the families also made assumptions about me, possibly viewing my presence as more aligned with the domestic and maternal aspects of family life. These assumptions, on both sides, shaped the nature of my data collection and the insights I could gain.

Moreover, the difference in age and experience between an adult researcher and child participants introduced another layer of complexity. Children may adjust their behaviours, either consciously or subconsciously, based on their perceptions of the research setting or their interactions with an adult. To address this, I made concerted efforts to build rapport with the children, create a comfortable environment, and encourage authentic engagement.

## **4.5 Ethical issues**

Ethical considerations are one of the main parts in research project and questions around ethics arise at all stage of the research process. Documentation of the initial stages and fieldwork, preparation for data collection and analyses, and dissemination of research findings require careful considerations. For example, the participants should be fully informed and given consent about research, data should be kept securely and treated confidentially. Apart from these traditional ethical standards, some researchers argue that ethical considerations can be more contextualised (Dörnyei, 2007; Kubanyiova, 2008). For instance, Kubanyiova (2008) divided research ethics into two parts as macro ethics – traditional ethical considerations and micro ethics – contextualised ethical considerations. Following this approach, I will consider ethical issues related to my research from the perspective of both macro ethics and micro ethics.

### **4.5.1 Macro ethical Considerations**

Prior to carrying out the fieldwork, I submitted my research ethics form and gained approval from the Head of the PhD programme at the Department of Educational Studies. The guidelines for all staff and student research at the department are based on the British Educational Research Association's (BERA).

I contacted with my participants via the complementary Turkish schools in London by visiting the schools after having permission from the school managers. After several months of engaging with parents from the complementary Turkish schools, I had opportunity to explain my research project to these parents. I presented myself as a PhD student at the department of Educational Studies in Goldsmiths, University of London and explained my research interest as being in the area of language policies that families use at home. Then, I handed out the information sheets and consent forms prepared for both parents and children. These documents contained information concerning the study, the family members' participation and the purpose of data collection. Information sheets and consent forms clarified the ethical considerations, such as: participation in the study was not compulsory, and that parents and children could withdraw from participation in the project at any stage if they so wished; the participants' identity (names and addresses) will be anonymised; the collected material (videos, pictures and info) will be used for research purposes only and will not be made available over the Internet and to anyone

outside the research project. Additionally, I made a short video clip for children participants which explains my research interest in an appropriate language of their ages and embedded a scannable QR code into the children's information sheet to get more attention from them.

#### **4.5.2 Micro ethical Considerations**

One of the most challenging parts in my fieldwork is that it requires a trust relationship with my research participants since I need to conduct my research at their private sphere, and in their interactions with other family members. For these reasons, I ensured my participants that my home visits will be accommodated with their private family plans, and other family member's schedule. Also, building a good relationship with children participants has greater importance for the success of this research as my research focus is the agentive role of children in family language policies. Therefore, I tried to spend a good amount of time with prospective children participants during breaks and celebration days in their complementary Turkish schools in order to encourage them to speak to me more freely and friendly way before visiting them at their households.

It is also important to note that my study includes visual data of children such as video-recordings of family interactions and photographs. Thus, I informed my participants about the use of the images that feature children and explained them that images with children's faces will be pixilated in the dissemination of my study which they agreed upon.

# Chapter 5 Data Analysis of Emir's Family

## Emir's Family

### Introduction

This chapter examines Emir's Family, offering a comprehensive analysis of their negotiated and evolving family language policies (FLP). Drawing on interactional data, Language Portrait (LP) analyses, interviews with the parents and children, and fieldnotes, the chapter explores how linguistic practices are shaped within this Turkish-English bilingual household. Beginning with an introduction to the family members and their migration history from Turkey to North London, the chapter situates Emir as the central child participant. Emir's language choices, particularly his frequent preference for English over Turkish, are highlighted as a reflection of his agency, which significantly influences the family's linguistic practices.

Through an in-depth exploration of Emir's language practices, the chapter contributes to understanding how children negotiate their linguistic repertoires in multilingual, intergenerational families. Emir's agency is examined in the context of his role as the eldest child, revealing how his choices reshape the family's linguistic dynamics and influence his siblings' language use.

The chapter also delves into intergenerational linguistic negotiations, focusing on the maternal grandmother, Ayten. As a monolingual Turkish speaker, Ayten's use of Turkish introduces contrasting language ideologies to those of the bilingual parents and the children's English-dominant preferences. These interactions underscore how linguistic repertoires are actively shaped by generational expectations, societal pressures, and individual agency, reflecting the complexities of maintaining a heritage language in a multilingual context.

Further, the chapter investigates Emir's role in the family's FLP, with particular attention to his LP data, which provides insights into how he perceives his linguistic repertoire and negotiates his position in relation to his parents' expectations. The analysis highlights the tensions between Emir's non-compliance with his parents' efforts to maintain Turkish and their attempts to balance cultural heritage with his linguistic preferences. By adopting a

child-centred perspective, the chapter illustrates how Emir's language ideologies and practices not only influence the linguistic choices of his siblings but also contribute to the transformation of the family's home language policy.

### **5.1. Introducing Emir's Family: Bridging Generations Between Turkey and the UK**

Emir's Family lives on the outskirts of North London in a multicultural and vibrant neighbourhood. The household includes parents Ali and Yeliz and their three children: Emir, aged 9, and twin daughters, Ela and Seda, aged 6 at the start of my fieldwork around October 2019. Both parents are Turkish English bilinguals who migrated to the UK approximately 20 years ago, motivated by the systemic marginalisation Alevis face in Turkey (Koçan & Öncü, 2004). As members of this religious and cultural community, their migration story reflects broader patterns within the Alevi diaspora (see Chapter 2 Context of the Study), with many relatives also settling in European countries like Germany.

The family maintains close ties with their extended relatives, particularly the maternal grandmother, Ayten, who spends half of each year living with them in London and the other half in Turkey. Ayten began commuting between Turkey and the UK after the birth of the family's first child, wanting to assist the parents in caring for their children. By the time I began my face-to-face fieldwork, Ayten was residing in Turkey but returned to the UK just before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. I was, however, able to meet her during an online interview later in the study. Emir's Family has also arranged regular audio and video calls, as well as summer holiday visits, with extended family members in Germany.

My ethnographic encounters with Emir's Family offered a window into the lived experiences, values, and linguistic dynamics that define their everyday life. Stepping into their home in North London felt like entering a space that both embraced and transcended cultural boundaries. Though physically far from Turkey, the family's home environment was imbued with deep connections to their heritage -connections maintained through material symbols and daily practices that reflect their identity as Alevis and Turkish speakers living in a multicultural British context.

From the very beginning, it was clear that the parents of this family's commitment to their cultural roots was inseparable from their approach to parenting and language use. Central to their home was the clock with Atatürk-themed displayed in their living room. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, is a pivotal figure in Turkish history. For many Turks, Atatürk is a symbol of national identity and pride. However, for the Alevi community, his legacy holds an even deeper significance.

Atatürk's secular reforms, which dismantled the strict religious rules of the Ottoman Empire, resonate profoundly with the Alevi belief in secularism and religious freedom. This transformation is emblematic of a broader shift within the Alevi community, where historical opposition to state authorities gave way to a conditional loyalty, provided that the state upholds the secular principles laid down by Atatürk (Kehl-Bodrogi, 2003). The Atatürk-themed clock in the family's living room not only marks time but also symbolizes this intricate intertwining of cultural and ideological identity. Moreover, the family's choice to set their Wi-Fi password as "Atatürk" underscores the pervasive role his legacy plays in their daily lives, serving as a subtle yet powerful reminder of the principles they hold dear.

Other aspects of my observations, such as the Turkish news channel continuously broadcasting updates and the traditional dishes served at the dinner table, further underscore their commitment to preserving a sense of Turkish identity amidst their life in London. These practices are reflective of the broader sociocultural dynamics within Turkish-speaking communities in the UK, where families often endeavour to maintain strong connections to their homeland and integrating their cultural values into their everyday experiences while navigating the complexities of a new cultural and linguistic environment (Smith-Christmas et al., 2019).

Yet, Emir's Family is not static in their cultural reproduction; rather, they engage in subtle, ongoing negotiations between their Turkish and British identities, particularly through language. This blending of cultural elements is vividly illustrated in moments like the one captured below, where one of the twin girls receives a Christmas present from Santa - portrayed by one of the teachers- at the Turkish complementary school. This scene exemplifies how this family navigates their multicultural life, incorporating both British and Turkish customs in their children's education and celebrations.



**Figure 9.** Ela receives Christmas present from Santa at Turkish complementary school.

During my home visits, I observed a marked preference among the children for English in everyday interactions, despite their parents' efforts to maintain Turkish as the home language. This ethnographic knowledge of Emir's Family -gleaned from casual conversations, mealtime talks, and spontaneous interactions- forms a crucial foundation for my subsequent analysis. By immersing myself in their world, I gained insight into the intricate, often tacit ways in how their linguistic repertoire, culture, and identity are negotiated within the family. The children's active participation in these negotiations, whether through language choice, cultural practices, or their relationship with technology, provides a rich context for understanding their linguistic repertoires and agency in shaping family language policy.

## **5.2. The Role of Children's Language Ideologies and Practices in Shaping the Family's Language Policy**

Emir (9 years old), the first child, was born into a home where both parents exclusively spoke Turkish to him and to each other. They ensured that all media, including TV cartoons and songs, were in Turkish. His maternal grandmother, who was also present to help with childcare, did not speak English. According to interviews with his parents, Ali and Yeliz, as Emir began to socialise outside the home, such as in playgrounds and libraries, he relied on body language and common sense to interact with other children, given that he only knew Turkish.

When he was three, his twin sisters, Ela and Seda, were born. At age four, Emir started Reception in North London, where he encountered English as the primary language of interaction for the first time in his life. Used to speaking only Turkish, he found it difficult to adjust to the school's English-speaking environment.

He requested that his parents speak English with him, despite their decision to maintain Turkish as the home language, believing that the children would naturally acquire English in school. Since that day, Emir has strictly avoided speaking Turkish, even with his parents and siblings. Following his lead, his younger twin sisters also speak exclusively in English, although their parents and grandmother continue to address them in Turkish.

In the joint parental interview with Yeliz and Ali, they talked about how their first-born child's negotiation on home language policy shaped the family language practices:

Excerpt 1.1.

Yeliz, the mother: We spoke only Turkish with Emir until he was 4 years old. His Turkish was very good, and his pronunciation was excellent. Being the first child, he had no other option actually. When he started learning English, he was suddenly taken aback. On the day he started Reception, he came home and said, "I don't know English, I felt really bad today. They speak so well, and I don't speak at all. From now on, let's speak English, please don't speak Turkish with me, I won't respond in Turkish anymore". The day he said that he stopped speaking Turkish.

I didn't take it very seriously at first, but from that day on, we didn't hear a single word of Turkish from Emir -until he started Turkish school this year. He got a bit enthusiastic there. He even said, "Today is Friday," the other day in Turkish. He also said, "Now I'm not afraid of forgetting English anymore." As parents, we still made an effort to speak Turkish with Emir, even if he responded in English. When the girls were born, we continued to speak Turkish with them as well, but because Emir always spoke English at home, the girls also spoke English with each other, with their brother, and with us.

When watching old videos, Yeliz remembers that the girls spoke more Turkish, even if it was in baby talk, than they do now.

Ali believes that cartoons on TV play a significant role in children learning a language. Yeliz adds, "The language spoken by the older sibling is also important". They attribute the girls' limited acquisition of Turkish during early childhood, compared to Emir. Ali says, "After the age of 4, Emir's resistance to Turkish, along with taking control of the TV and watching only English content, led to the girls speaking exclusively in English" (Parental Interview, 11 November 2019, Translated from Turkish).

Emir (9), the first child in this family, was raised in an environment where Turkish was the main language of communication. Yeliz and Ali initially established Turkish as the language of interaction at home, which Emir complied with until the age of four. At this stage, Turkish was the only language spoken to Emir, and as the first child, he had no alternative language environment to influence his language use. Emir's compliance with speaking Turkish was evident, as his pronunciation and language skills were strong. This immersive Turkish FLP was meant to ensure that Emir developed strong language skills in his home/heritage language before eventually acquiring English naturally in school.

However, Emir's experience upon starting Reception when he was 4 years old marked a significant shift in his language use and his compliance with the family's language policy. Despite the school's multicultural and multilingual environment, English was the language of instruction, and Emir, who had only spoken Turkish until then, found himself at a disadvantage. Feeling overwhelmed and out of place in an English-speaking environment, Emir made a deliberate choice to abandon Turkish and requested that the family switch to English. This moment marked a pivotal shift in his language ideologies, which had a profound impact on the family language policy (FLP). His statement, "I won't respond in Turkish anymore," (in Excerpt 1.1.) signalled a resistance to the existing compliance regime and an assertion of his agency. This resistance was not merely a passive response, but a strategic choice influenced by his social environment and emotional needs. Emir's rejection of Turkish and enforcement of an English-only rule aligns with Valentine's (2011) argument in childhood studies that agency is not simply a matter of free choice but is shaped by power dynamics within social environments. Emir's agency exemplifies how children negotiate power within the family, actively influencing the linguistic landscape to align with their own preferences and perceived needs.

As stated above, Emir's negotiation of language shift from Turkish in favour of English can be interpreted that he is non-compliant with the code-of-interaction which his parents set. As a clear act of agency, Emir's agentive stance is similar to the cases described by Gafaranga (2010) and Kopeliovich (2013). In his study of Rwandan families in Belgium, Gafaranga (2010) observes how children negotiate and adopt strategies to change the medium of interaction from Kinyarwanda to French (from their parents' home language to the dominant language of the residing country) through what he refers to as a "medium request". Similarly, Kopeliovich (2013) investigates how Yotam, one of her sons,

exemplifies agency through his refusal to speak Russian, which she describes as a form of “linguistic rebellion.” Rather than following the linguistic norms set by his parents, who use Russian as the primary language at home, Yotam consciously chooses to speak Hebrew, the dominant language in his wider social context. This decision reflects his active role in shaping his linguistic environment, asserting Hebrew as his preferred language of interaction. Like Yotam, Emir rejects the home language, Turkish, in favour of English, the dominant language in his school and social surroundings. Emir’s insistence on communicating in English, despite his parents’ efforts to maintain Turkish as the language of the home, mirrors Yotam’s refusal to conform to his parents’ linguistic expectations. Both children exercise their agency by making deliberate language choices that align with their personal preferences and the linguistic landscape of their respective environments, ultimately influencing their family language practices.

Interestingly, Emir’s recent engagement with Turkish at the Turkish complementary school marks a partial return to the original compliance regime. As Curdt-Christiansen and Huang (2020) indicated, external factors, such as participation in complementary education, can significantly influence children’s attitudes and language ideologies toward their home language. Emir’s statement, as recounted by his parents, “Now I’m not afraid of forgetting English anymore,” suggests that his previous resistance to Turkish FLP was partly driven by a fear of ‘somehow’ losing English, a fear that has since diminished. This statement reflects a shift in Emir’s language ideology, as he no longer perceives Turkish and English as being in competition but rather as complementary languages. Additionally, this change in attitude reflects how compliance with language expectations is not static but can evolve as the child’s environment and perceptions change.

Over time, Emir’s resistance to Turkish FLP became a new linguistic norm in the household, where English became the dominant language among siblings. Emir’s non-compliance effectively established English as the primary language of interaction for his younger sisters as well.

As Smith-Christmas (2020) states, there is a reflexive relation that exists between compliance and linguistic norms. Emir’s non-compliance with the parental expectation to speak Turkish evolved into a new linguistic norm within the family, resulting his twin sisters’ adaptation of English as their primary language at home. In other words, his

agency in rejecting Turkish and embracing English effectively sanctioned the use of English as the default language, not just for himself but for his siblings as well. Moreover, Emir's choice to prioritise English over Turkish disrupted the established linguistic norms within the family, subverting the typical parent-child power dynamic (generational positioning) where parents set the language of interaction.

Emir's insistence on speaking only English can be seen as an expansion and strategic renegotiation of his linguistic repertoire. Before starting school, his linguistic repertoire was primarily in Turkish. However, after being exposed to an English-speaking environment, he prioritised English as the language he needed to succeed and belong. This shift was not just a passive absorption of the new language but a deliberate choice to favour English over Turkish. By doing so, Emir was not only expanding his linguistic repertoire but also shaping the family's overall linguistic repertoire, as his sisters followed his lead. The shift in family language practices due to Emir's stance highlights generational ordering (Alanen, 2009), where his agency influences the distribution of authority and linguistic norms in the household.

Emir's parents provide valuable insights into how language dynamics have evolved within the family, but to fully understand Emir's agency, it is essential to examine his own accounts and self-representations. His language portrait (LP) data offers a unique window into his lived experiences, preferences, and the motivations behind his language choices. By analysing Emir's LP data, we can gain a deeper understanding of how he navigates and negotiates the linguistic ideologies and practices, not just in response to parental expectations but also in asserting his own preferences and resisting or embracing certain languages and enacting his agency. The following section explore Emir's LP data, providing further evidence of how children articulate their linguistic identities and exercise agency within the family context.

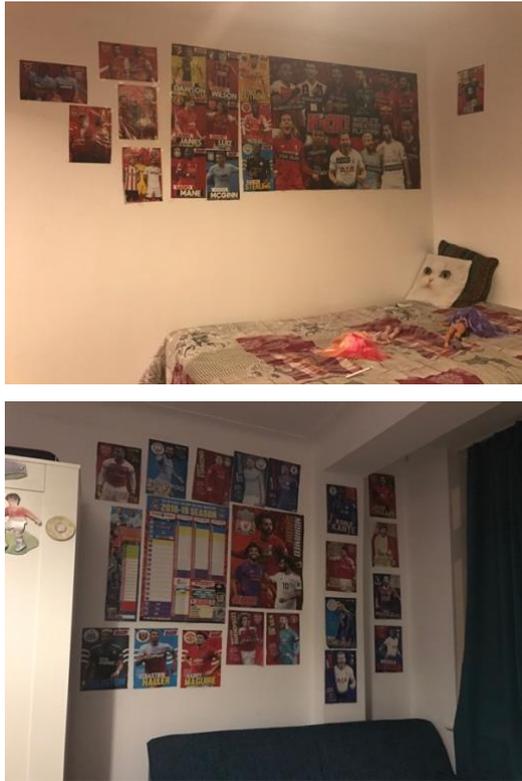
### **5.3. Challenging the Family Script: Emir's Resistance to Parental FLP in His Language Portrait**

Building on these ethnographic insights, I now turn to the Language Portrait (LP) data collected from Emir's Family, beginning with Emir's Language Portrait, to explore how these familial and broader cultural and linguistic dynamics manifest in the child's self-perception and language use. The LPs serve as both a visual and conceptual representation

of the children's linguistic repertoires, revealing the ways in which they internalise, express, and negotiate their multilingual realities. Emir's portrait, in particular, offers a lens through which we can examine his experiences of multilingualism and the ways in which he positions himself within the family's broader cultural and linguistic framework. To fully understand the context in which Emir's LP was produced, it is essential to first consider the environment and interactions that shaped the experience. Upon entering the family's two-storey semi-detached house for the first time, I was immediately greeted by full hugs from Yeliz and Ali, accompanied by the familiar scent of traditional Turkish cuisine. The dinner table, laden with a variety of dishes, vividly reminded me of gatherings in my own hometown. Despite the warm hospitality, I remained conscious of my role as a researcher, rather than a casual guest. Graciously, I expressed my gratitude but gently suggested that such elaborate preparations would not be necessary for future visits. This would help keep the focus of our interactions on the research at hand, without the distraction of over-formality.

During dinner, the children sat quietly, their eyes occasionally flicking toward me as they ate. My conversation with the parents flowed in Turkish, while the children preferred to interact in English, even when spoken to in Turkish by their parents. This initial observation hinted at the language dynamics within the family, setting the stage for my later exploration of Emir's language portrait.

After the meal, Emir brought out a Monopoly game, which served as an icebreaker. As we played, the children's initial shyness faded, and they began to engage more openly. Soon, the room was buzzing with activity -Emir excitedly describing his LEGO spacecraft, while his sisters vied for attention with their drawings. The lively, chaotic atmosphere was a stark contrast to the earlier quiet at the dinner table, revealing the children's energetic and expressive natures.



**Figure 10.** Emir's room

When it was time to begin the interview, Yeliz, the mother, gently reminded Emir of the purpose of my visit. He led me to his room, a spacious and orderly space adorned with football player stickers and shelves filled with books and toys. We settled on the couch, and I introduced the colouring activity, presenting him with two options: traditional colour pens or an iPad with a digital body silhouette and Apple pencil. Emir eagerly chose the digital option and quickly mastered the app, demonstrating both his enthusiasm and his comfort with technology.

With the setting prepared and the context made clear, I guided Emir through the LP interview, following a structured approach to examine his linguistic experiences and perceptions.

Before starting to the LP interview, I asked Emir to think about the people, places, situations, and activities that he associates with different ways of communicating. I encouraged him to reflect not only on his current language use but also on languages that have been significant in the past and those he wishes to maintain in the future. To help refine the task, I posed supplementary questions, such as, “You might perhaps begin with languages or way of speaking that are currently important to you, and also think of those

which are farther in the past or which might still occur”, “What place would you allocate them in the picture?” “What do you think about the language use that are found to be in your environment?” (Busch, 2018a, p. 8).

I then asked Emir to select colours that represent the different languages and modes of communication in his life and to assign them to specific parts of the body image. When introducing the activity, I avoided simplifying the task by saying, “use a different colour for each language you speak,” as this could limit the complexity of his linguistic repertoire and reinforce the notion of languages as distinct, bounded entities. Instead, I adapted a prompt from Busch (2018a, p. 8):

“I invite you to use this space to represent the languages and ways of speaking that are meaningful in your life. You might think about how you use language with different people (like your mother, friends, grandparents) or in different places (such as at home, school, or on holiday). There are no right or wrong answers here. You can add captions or explain your choices. Choose colours that represent the different languages and ways of speaking that hold special significance for you.”

I also told him that I can speak both Turkish and English, and that he was free to switch between these languages or mix them in any way he felt comfortable. My intention was to better understand his relationship with these languages and his ways of speaking. Although he preferred to speak in English, he mentioned that he could understand me if I spoke in Turkish. Throughout the Language Portrait task, I primarily communicated with him in English. During my session with Emir, his enthusiasm and focus were evident as he began colouring the body image, starting with the colour he had assigned to English. His eagerness to engage with the task without seeking further clarification stood out, highlighting his comfort with the activity. This moment provided a glimpse into how Emir navigates his linguistic world, embodying his languages in the task at hand. As I observed him, I noted how his actions, such as checking his hand before colouring the fingers, revealed a deeper connection between his bodily awareness and his linguistic identity. Additionally, I found that conducting the LP interview while the child creates their task is particularly valuable, as it allows the researcher to observe the child’s production process and intervene with questions if anything arises that directly relates to their linguistic experiences at that moment.

#### 5.4. Embodied Metaphors: Language Skills and Body Functions in Emir's Language Portrait

Emir began by selecting a beige colour to represent English. He started by colouring the head, moved down to the mouth, and then to the shoulders on the body image. At one point, he paused to check his own hands and fingers. I observed him intently, curious about what he was up to. Then, he coloured the fingers on the right hand of the body image. It was then that I realised what he was doing and asked, “Did you just check which hand you use for writing?”. He nodded in response.



**Figure 11.** Emir's (9 years old) language portrait.

When Emir chose beige for English and began colouring the head, mouth, and shoulders, he was engaging in a symbolic act that connected English with the parts of his body most involved in communication and cognition. According to Busch (2018), this kind of symbolic placement reflects how the individual perceives the language's role in their life. For Emir, English is not just a language he speaks; it is the language through which he processes thoughts (head) and communicates with others (mouth). Emir's association of English with these specific body parts highlights its dominance in his linguistic repertoire and aligns with language ideologies that prioritise English as the default medium for intellectual and communicative tasks.

Emir's action of checking his hands before colouring the fingers on the body image indicates a deep connection between his bodily experience and his language use. This act suggests that for Emir, English is not only a language but also a practical tool tied to his physical body, specifically his right hand, which he uses for writing. Busch's (2021) analysis would view this as an example of how language is not only a cognitive or social resource but also an embodied one. Emir's need to check his writing hand before colouring the fingers illustrates his agency in ensuring that the representation accurately reflects his lived experience with English, further influenced by prevailing ideologies that link English proficiency with literacy and academic success.

Busch's (2021) framework also suggests that the way individuals choose to represent languages in the LP can reveal their evaluative stance toward those languages. Emir's careful selection of beige, the size of this colour occupying the body image, and the specific body parts he chose to colour suggest that English holds a primary position in his language hierarchy. The deliberate connection between English and the parts of his body most involved in intellectual and communicative activities could indicate that Emir views English as the dominant or most significant language in his life.

Emir then chose a burgundy colour to represent Turkish in his LP. He carefully placed dots of this colour in the head area, then small strips on the right arm, followed by more strips on the left arm. Finally, he added another dot at the centre of the torso, overlapping with a beige-coloured circle. He followed same order for Spanish in purple colour, except colouring mouth area with this colour. When asked to explain this placement, Emir said:

Excerpt 1.2.

- |   |             |  |
|---|-------------|--|
| 1 | Emir        | And... Ermm. It also I put the dots, no because, some...my ... The thing is, in my mind doesn't Turkish or French or another language is because of my memory of another language. |
| 2 | Interviewer | Do you think it's easier for you to speak in English rather than Turkish?  |
| 3 | Emir        | Yes.   |
| 4 | Interviewer | Is this because you know the vocab in English, or you speak mostly in English to people around you?  |

5	Emir	No, not that. It's because I was born in England, in London.
6	Interviewer	Which language you mostly speak with your family members?
7	Emir	I do speak English, although my mom and dad speak Turkish to me.
8	Interviewer	With your twin sisters?
9	Emir	English.
10	Interviewer	Your mom told me that you stop speaking Turkish after the 1 <sup>st</sup> day at Reception. Is this correct?
11	Emir	Well, the thing is when I was 5 years old, I completely forgot how to speak Turkish and started talking English.
12	Interviewer	Why do you think you completely forgot speaking Turkish like that?
13	Emir	I don't know.
14	Interviewer	Do you have any idea? Did you experience something related to speaking Turkish at school?
15	Emir	No, not like that. ((He sighs unwillingly)). Because it's school. You speak English there.
16	Interviewer	Yeah, but it doesn't mean that this will lead you to forget how to speak Turkish, does it?
17	Emir	((silence)).

Emir starts by reflecting on how languages (Turkish, French) are tied to his memories. His use of the phrase “memory of another language” in line 1 suggests that Turkish, despite being his first language, became distanced in his mind. His vague and disjointed phrasing indicates his struggle to articulate this shift, possibly because his relationship with Turkish is now more abstract. The placement of these dots on the head and arms, rather than the mouth, aligns with his parents’ observation in Excerpt 1.1. that Emir suddenly stopped speaking in Turkish when he started Reception, and they did not hear a

word in Turkish from him since then. This suggests that while Turkish may still hold cognitive and emotional significance for him (indicated by the dots in the head and torso), it is no longer an active part of his verbal expression. Emir's mention of "memory of another language" in line 1 reflects his internal struggle with maintaining Turkish. He describes "forgetting" Turkish as a pivotal moment when he was five, aligning with his entry into the school system, where English became dominant. As Busch (2021) indicates, one's repertoire are not just tools of communication but are connected to personal experiences, emotions, and memories.

When asked if his comfort in English is due to vocabulary knowledge or frequent English communication, Emir attributes it instead to his birth and upbringing in England. This suggests that he sees his language use as inherently tied to his geographical and social identity ("I was born in England, in London" in line 5). Emir's language shift reflects his sense of belonging to his environment rather than merely linguistic proficiency. This spatial positioning, in turn, signifies his desire to index his identity and align himself with the English-speaking spaces he occupies, such as his school and social environment, over the Turkish-speaking one at home.

Despite the parents speaking Turkish, Emir primarily responds in English in line 7. This indicates that while the home language policy is Turkish, Emir has agency in choosing English. His interaction with his twin sisters also occurs in English (line 9), reinforcing the idea that his language practices mirror the societal language ideologies he has internalised. As Kheirkhah and Cekaite (2018) found in their study with Iranian families in Sweden, older siblings often act as experts in societal languages and bring aspects of the societal language into the familial domain. Emir, as an older sibling, influenced his twin sister's language use by speaking only English and resisting parental family language policy. Similarly, Smith-Christmas (2014)'s study of a Gaelic-English family on the Isle of Skye, Scotland, shows that as children grow older, they align their language ideologies with those of the wider society. In her study, siblings began using only English with each other and with their parents, gradually shifting away from Gaelic as the primary language in the family.

Emir's parents' account in [Excerpt 1.1](#) corroborates this, highlighting how Emir's language ideologies and practices have influenced his younger siblings' language use at

home. Emir's reluctance to place the dots in the mouth area could indicate a subconscious acknowledgment of his reduced comfort in speaking Turkish.

Emir's choice to colour the head, mouth, and hand in connection with English (beige) highlights the central role of English in his linguistic identity. By aligning English with these specific body parts, Emir is expressing how deeply English is embedded in his everyday life -both mentally and physically, which he connects to his identity as someone born in London. His statement, "It's because I was born in England, in London," in line 4 suggests that he views English as more natural and appropriate for his environment, demonstrating how geographic and cultural contexts influence language choices. The school is a critical site for Emir's language shift. He explicitly connects forgetting Turkish with his experience in school, where English is the norm.

Emir acknowledges that after his first day in Reception, he "completely forgot how to speak Turkish" (line 11). This could be interpreted as a psychological or emotional response to a new environment. Starting school may have exposed Emir to English as the dominant language of authority and peer interaction, leading him to suppress his use of Turkish. His description of "forgetting" Turkish suggests that the language did not disappear entirely from his repertoire but rather became dormant or inaccessible until he started Turkish complementary school.

When asked why he thinks he forgot Turkish, Emir expresses uncertainty ("I don't know") in line 13. His hesitation and sigh before responding ("Because it's school. You speak English there.") in line 15 may indicate that the school environment subtly influenced his language preferences. This shift might also point to feelings of linguistic or cultural dissonance, as Emir found himself navigating between two different linguistic environments—one at home and another at school.

When I question whether speaking English at school necessarily means forgetting Turkish, Emir remains silent. This silence could imply various things: confusion, discomfort, or even an inability to explain how or why this language shift occurred. It could also reflect the emotional complexity of language loss, especially at a young age. For Emir, the process of losing Turkish might not have been conscious or voluntary, but rather a byproduct of immersion in an English-dominant context.

Emir's repeated focus on being born in England and living in London suggests that he views himself primarily as an English speaker, with Turkish becoming more peripheral. This identification with his social environment plays a significant role in shaping his language ideologies. The agency he exercises in choosing English over Turkish, despite his parents' use of Turkish, highlights how children in bilingual settings actively negotiate their linguistic identities. The parents' attempt to maintain Turkish in the household does not appear to have reversed Emir's shift. Emir's agency in deciding to speak English with his siblings and in his interactions with his parents shows how child agency can influence family language policies. His mother's recounting of Emir's language shift after Reception indicates that this shift was unexpected and not initiated by parental decisions but rather by Emir's response to external social factors.

Emir's comment, "Because it's school. You speak English there," reflects how mainstream educational environments are steeped in monolingual language ideologies. As Quehl (2021) highlights in his ethnographic study of mainstream schools in England, these ideologies manifest in classrooms where languages other than English are rarely audible or visible in instruction or resources. For Emir, this likely relegated Turkish, his heritage language, to a peripheral role, lacking recognition or validation within his educational context.

The negotiation of identity also extended to Emir's broader sense of belonging. His father, Ali, provided further insight into how Emir's perception of his Turkish identity evolved:

Excerpt 1.3.

Emir was rejecting the idea that he is Turkish. When the topic came up, he would get angry and deny that Turkish was part of his identity. He would say, "No, I was born here. I'm British. Don't tell me that I'm Turkish." We tried to explain to him that many of his close friends at school came from diverse backgrounds as well. For instance, one child's parents were Spanish, while another's were Chinese, and so on. It was hard for him to accept his ethnic identity until he started attending the Turkish [complementary] school. We told him that the kids in his class had one or both parents who were Turkish, and so they were also Turkish. He was so surprised. After that, he relaxed and began to accept that being Turkish was part of his identity (Parental Interview, 11 November 2019, Translated from Turkish).

As his father explained, Emir initially rejected the idea of being Turkish, emphasising his British identity and resisting any association with his ethnic roots. It was only after he began attending a Turkish complementary school, where his peers also shared Turkish heritage, that Emir started to accept this part of his identity. The complementary school provided a space where Emir could see Turkishness reflected in others, facilitating a gradual acceptance of this part of his heritage. As Lytra et al. (2020) remind us, while UK mainstream schools often claim to promote cultural and linguistic diversity, they can sometimes adopt a tokenistic approach, failing to fully integrate students' home languages into their everyday learning experiences. This tendency overlooks the richness of students' ethnocultural identities, reducing their linguistic diversity to a symbolic gesture rather than an embedded practice. In contrast, Turkish complementary schools like the one Emir attended play a more substantive role in actively maintaining and nurturing students' multilingual repertoires, providing a space where their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are more deeply valued and incorporated. For Emir, this was key in helping him reconcile his Turkish identity, as the complementary school offered a community where his linguistic and cultural heritage were part of everyday interaction, not just highlighted during special occasions (Lytra, 2011, 2012).

Continuing his LP task, Emir talked about how he navigates his language use, balancing personal preferences, societal norms, and family expectations in shaping their linguistic repertoire.

Excerpt 1. 4.

- |    |             |   |
|----|-------------|---|
| 18 | Interviewer | Can you describe this body image to me you coloured? What is says to us?                          |
| 19 | Emir        | Well, on my mouth, I put English, Spanish, German and French. I do not Turkish.                   |
| 20 | Interviewer | Why?  |
| 21 | Emir        | Because I understand it more than I can speak it.   |
| 22 | Interviewer | I see. Do you think that you will keep some of these languages with you when you became an adult? |

23	Emir	Well, I dunno why different countries have different languages, but
24	Emir	the thing is, it's hard to communicate when people travel from one country to another.
25	Emir	I'd be easier if all people speak the same language around the world.
26	Interviewer	Dou you feel the same way when you travel to Turkey or Germany?
27	Emir	Well, people can speak both Turkish and English in most of the places I've been.
28	Emir	For example, last summer we went to Club Resort Atlantis and
29	Emir	I didn't need to speak Turkish the people there could speak English and Turkish.
30	Interviewer	What do you think about you Spanish?
31	Emir	I think my Spanish is in mid-level and I enjoy learning Spanish.
32	Interviewer	Do you watch anything with different languages on the TV?
33	Emir	I used to watch TRT <b>Çocuk</b> [a Turkish TV for kids] but not anymore. kids
34	Interviewer	Why you speak only English when your parents speak to in Turkish?
35	Emir	Because that's my main language.
36	Interviewer	Sure, it is. But do you think that they want you to speak Turkish sometimes?
37	Emir	Well, not think. They obviously want me. And I know that.

Lines 19 and 21 show that Emir's decision not to place Turkish in the mouth of the body image but to include English, Spanish, German, and French suggests that he associates these languages more with his active use of communication. In the context of Busch's (2018) framework on language portraits, the mouth represents spoken communication, suggesting that Emir associates these languages with active use, while Turkish is relegated to a more passive role. His explanation, "I understand it more than I can speak

it,” highlights how Turkish exists in his repertoire but is not actively used in his communication, aligning with the idea that his proficiency in Turkish is more receptive than productive.

Emir’s reflection on the difficulty of communication when traveling between countries (lines 23–25) reveals his understanding of language diversity as a practical challenge. His statement “It’d be easier if all people spoke the same language” echoes a utilitarian view of language, where a single common language is seen as a solution to linguistic barriers. While Emir does not specify which language he envisions as the “same language,” his experiences traveling to Turkey and navigating communication in touristic spaces (lines 27–29) may have influenced this perspective. This aligns with broader discussions on the complexities of linguistic diversity and the desire for ease in communication across global contexts (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020).

His mention of Spanish as a language he enjoys learning (line 31) demonstrates a positive engagement with multilingualism beyond English. Emir’s parents mentioned in our interview that Emir’s Spanish teacher was impressed by his progress in the language. Emir’s self-assessment of the languages in his repertoire -placing Spanish at a “mid-level” and comparing his ability to speak Turkish with his understanding of it in line 21- illustrates how this child navigates and negotiates his multilingual experiences, perceiving each language through the lens of his daily practices and interactions.

The last line in the excerpt, “Well, not think. They obviously want me. And I know that,” highlights Emir’s strong sense of agency. Here, he directly acknowledges his parents’ desire for him to speak Turkish, yet he consciously chooses not to fulfil that expectation. Emir is fully aware of the family’s FLP, but he navigates it in his own way by prioritising English as his “main language” in line 35. This reflects a deliberate decision, not simply passive compliance or resistance, but rather an act of negotiating between parental wishes and his own linguistic preferences. Emir’s discourse in this moment, combined with his body image choices, exemplifies the kind of child agency in FLP that goes beyond just language use -it involves an understanding of familial expectations and the assertion of his own linguistic identity. Emir’s understanding of his parents’ desire for him to use Turkish, coupled with his decision to prioritise English, suggests that family language practices are negotiated spaces where both parental influence and child agency coexist

and compete. Emir actively participates in this negotiation by acknowledging his parents' wishes while asserting his own language preference. This aligns with the concept of FLP as a dynamic, interactional space where children are not just passive participants but also active agents who can reshape family language dynamics.

#### **5.4. Linguistic Norms in Flux as Children Navigate Multilingual Repertoires**

The analysis of Emir's Language Portrait (LP) data underscores how the first-born child explicitly asserts his agency by resisting his parents' chosen language of interaction. Smith-Christmas (2020, p. 228) highlights that "children's repeated acts of linguistic (non)compliance can shape linguistic norms within the family". Emir's refusal to comply with his parents' preference for Turkish as the home language has firmly established English as the dominant language of interaction. His agency manifests through various strategies, including controlling family media consumption (only watching English TV), speaking solely in English, and encouraging his parents to communicate with him in English. As the parents noted in their interview (Excerpt 1.1), this shift also influenced his younger sisters' language use, further embedding English as the family's linguistic norm. In the conversational data below, I demonstrate how Emir's resistance to parental language norms effectively redefined the family's linguistic landscape. Although the children in this family are observed using an English-only repertoire with each other, the practiced language policy with their parents seems more complex.

The following excerpt is taken from a family dinner during my second visit to Emir's Family. After we finished eating and chatting, the twin girls, Ela and Seda, asked for my iPad, as I had promised them a colouring activity if they joined us for dinner. My goal was to observe all family members together around the table to capture their everyday interactions. From previous school and home visits, I was aware that Ela and Seda (both 6 years old) were huge fans of the Frozen movie. Thus, I uploaded a digital colouring book featuring characters from Frozen. Seda chose to colour a line drawing of one of the main characters, Anna. In this excerpt, Ali (the father), myself (the interviewer), Ela, and Seda engage in a conversation about the colour of Anna's hair.

##### Excerpt 1.5.

38	Interviewer	Saçları sanki kahverengiydi. (Her hair looked brown.)
39	Ali	Brown, yeah?
40	Interviewer	Brown.
41	Seda	No, it wasn't.
42	Interviewer	Maybe it was blonde. Sarı mıydı saçları? (Was her hair blonde?)
43	Seda	Anna's hair was turning white.
44	Ali	White? <b>White</b> saç olur mu? İhtiyarlamış mı hemen? (Is it possible to have white hair [for Anna]? Has she become old?)
45	Seda	Daddy, what? What is ih- ihtiş...?
46	Ali	((laughs)) İhtiyarlamış yani yaşlanmış mı dedim? She isn't that old, is she? (I asked, "Is she getting old?")
47	Seda	But in the movie...
48	Interviewer	You girls told me that you just learn the colours in Turkish in your Turkish school, right?
49	Ela	Yes.
50	Seda	Uh-huh, yes.
51	Interviewer	Do you remember how this colour called in Turkish?
52	Ela	((whispering something inaudible in Turkish)).
53	Interviewer	Say it again?

54	Ela	((shyly)) Kırmızı.  (Red)
55	Interviewer	Well done Ela. Bu hangi renk?  (What is this colour?)
56	Ela	It begins with -t.
57	Interviewer	Exactly, go on.
58	Ela	((spells the first three letters of the word)) t-u-r... Turuncu, turuncu!  (Orange, orange!)
59	Ali	Aferin benim akıllı kızım.  (Very well my smart girl.)

The excerpt above provides insight into the ways children, particularly Ela and Seda, navigate their linguistic environment. Emir's influence on his siblings, as previously discussed, sets the stage for English as the dominant language of interaction in this household. However, moments like this reflect the ongoing negotiation between the dominant societal language (English) and the home language (Turkish), reinforcing the complexity of FLP. As Smith-Christmas (2020) highlights, children's repeated acts of linguistic (non)compliance can influence linguistic norms within the family.

In Line 38, the interviewer starts conversation in Turkish, but the father, Ali, immediately switches to English ("Brown, yeah?") in line 39, signalling the family's fluid language repertoire where both Turkish and English are used interchangeably. This alignment between the parent and the child is an act of language negotiation, where English emerges as a dominant conversational language.

My switch to English, as an interviewer, in line 40 and 42 is a direct response to Ali's use of English in line 39. I observe that translanguaging is a common practice in this family's linguistic repertoire. Such practices can be indicative of the family's everyday language

use, where both languages are active and accessible depending on the context, the topic of conversation, or the interlocutors involved.

Seda's correction, "No, it wasn't" (line 41) when talking about the hair colour shows her active participation in controlling the flow of the conversation.

When Seda responds in English, Ali again shifts to Turkish ("White saç olur mu? İhtiyarlamış mı hemen?") in line 44. The father, Ali, draws on his full linguistic repertoire to engage with his child. Rather than simply alternating between distinct linguistic codes, Ali fluidly integrates Turkish into the exchange, creating an opportunity for Seda to engage with multiple linguistic resources. This translanguaging practice reflects Ali's effort to maintain Turkish in the conversation while allowing for flexible and dynamic language use.

Ali might be aiming to ensure that his children's Turkish is maintained and developed, even if they predominantly use English. Seda's question in line 45 - "Daddy, what? What is ih- ihtiş?" - is an important demonstration of her agency in navigating her linguistic repertoire. Although Seda predominantly responds in English throughout the conversation, she shows curiosity and a willingness to engage with Turkish by asking about the unfamiliar Turkish term "*ihtiş*" (a mispronunciation of *ihtiyarlamış*, meaning "aged" or "getting old"). This indicates that Seda is not passively accepting her lack of understanding but is actively seeking clarification to integrate new linguistic knowledge into her repertoire.

Her father's translingual turn in line 46, "İhtiyarlamış yani yaşlanmış mı dedim?", is supportive and pedagogical. Ali not only provides the correct word (*ihtiyarlamış*) but also explains its meaning (*yaşlanmış*, "getting old") in a way that integrates both languages (Turkish and English), making the interaction more accessible for Seda. The translation of what Ali said functions as a strategy to bring the Turkish language into focus. It also shows that Ali, the father, adopts a parallel bilingual medium of interaction (Gafaranga, 2010), with neither party explicitly or implicitly requesting a switch in medium.

In line 48, the interviewer explicitly mentions Turkish language learning in the complementary school context. Both Ela and Seda acknowledge the connection between the colours they learned in Turkish school and their ongoing language practices, reflecting how FLP intersects with external influences like Turkish complementary schooling. The

children’s engagement with this formal Turkish learning environment reflects another layer of language policy negotiation. Both children engage with the language-learning question and provide responses in Turkish (“Kırmızı” and “Turuncu”). Ali’s praise for Ela’s ability to recall Turkish (“Aferin benim akıllı kızım”) in line 59 underscores a strategy in FLP, where parents offer positive reinforcement to encourage the use of the home language.

Smith-Christmas (2021) highlights that children play active roles in FLP by resisting or negotiating linguistic norms, challenging compliance regimes, and shaping language use through their choices. The twin girls as both language users and decision-makers are central to understanding the micro-level dynamics of FLP, where children are not merely passive recipients of language but active participants who influence language outcomes. This interaction demonstrates the dynamic and relational nature of language policy as it plays out in daily life. In this case, Ela and Seda’s response to their father’s Turkish prompts shows their agency in the multilingual negotiation at home. Their partial compliance -engaging in Turkish while slipping back into English- reflects how children can selectively adopt or resist the linguistic choices presented to them. By doing so, they contribute to shaping their family’s language policy.

Gafaranga (2010) emphasises the co-construction of language shift in family interactions, where speakers “talk language shift into being” (p. 249) through their linguistic choices and alignments. The excerpt demonstrates this process, as multiple language choices and shifts occur within the conversation.

In the excerpt below, Yeliz (the mother), Emir (9 years old) and Ela (6 years old) are discussing where the missing piece of Emir’s toy might be in the house.

Excerpt 1.7

- |    |       |   |
|----|-------|---|
| 60 | Emir  | Mom, where is that, where is that golden thing?           |
| 61 | Yeliz | Yuvarlak şeyi mi diyorsun?<br>(You mean the round thing?) |
| 62 | Emir  | That goes up after this.                                  |

63	Yeliz	Onu görmedim, yukarda mıydı? Piyanonun oralarda olabilir. (I didn't see it, was it upstairs? Maybe near the piano.)
64	Emir	Wait, there is another piece missing.
65	Yeliz	That this golden piece, yeah? Şu altın rengi olan. (That golden one.)
66	Ela	You mean this piece.
67	Yeliz	Yok, bu değil. (No, not this one.)

In Excerpt 1.7, Yeliz particularly adopts the strategy of “dual-lingual” interactions, which described by Saville-Troike (1987) as participants have mutual understanding of each other’s codes but consistently use different languages. For instance, in line 61, Yeliz answers Emir’s question in Turkish (“Yuvarlak şeyi mi diyorsun?”) even though Emir asks the question in English. Emir persists in English in line 62, but Yeliz continues her responses in Turkish. This strategy reflects Yeliz’s effort to preserve Turkish within the household. By resisting the full switch to English, Yeliz maintains a presence of the minority language, creating a space where both languages coexist, but without fully yielding to the dominant language. Similarly, Smith-Christmas (2014) found in her study that the mother and maternal grandmother from Campbell family, a Gaelic-English intergenerational family in Scotland, stick to their home language, Gaelic, while children respond in English. According to Gafaranga (2010), minority language-speaking parents can contribute to language shift by yielding to their children's preference for the majority language. However, in contrast, Yeliz actively navigates between English and Turkish with her children, maintaining the home language in her responses even when Emir continues speaking in English.

In line 66, Yeliz incorporates both English and Turkish to sustain the interaction within a bilingual medium. From a translanguaging perspective, this reflects her ability to fluidly

draw on her full linguistic repertoire, rather than simply alternating between separate codes. While Lanza (2007) describes this as an “adult code-switching” strategy, Yeliz’s use of multiple linguistic resources can be seen as a way to maintain Turkish within the home while engaging with her children’s predominantly English linguistic practices. By continuing to respond in Turkish, she navigates a dynamic and flexible multilingual interaction, balancing heritage language maintenance with responsiveness to her children’s linguistic preferences. Ela, responding in English in line 66, further reinforces the children’s preference for English during the interaction. Yet, Yeliz maintains her Turkish response in line 67 (“Yok, bu değil” - No, not this one). This keeps Turkish present in the interaction, subtly encouraging the children’s exposure to full family repertoires.

This practice from the excerpts above aligns with Kopeliovich’s (2013) study on immigrant families, where parents continue using their heritage language despite children’s shift to the majority language, often seen in family language policy (FLP) research across various cultural contexts.

### **5.5. Navigating Language Ideologies Across Generations: The Role of the Grandmother**

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 changed the way I collected data, particularly with Emir’s Family. My usual in-person observations were replaced with remote visits, conducted online through a screen. While this method allowed me to continue my research, it also presented several challenges that complicated my observations and interactions with the family. The physical distance and technological barriers often left me feeling somewhat alienated from the nuances of the family’s home dynamics, a reflexive realisation I had to acknowledge as part of the research process.

One of the main challenges was managing the environment through the screen. Internet connectivity issues frequently disrupted the flow of interactions, and with three young children in the house, the control over the online setting became increasingly difficult. On several occasions, the children -Emir, Ela, and Seda- would take over the computer during meetings, making it hard to maintain a steady dialogue or observation. These instances served as reminders of the complexities of conducting ethnographic work remotely, where my usual ability to observe and intervene in the setting was significantly limited.

However, amidst these challenges, the family's dynamics during lockdown provided a unique insight into how generational ordering influenced family language practices. During this time, the maternal grandmother, Ayten, moved in with the family, bringing with her a shift in the language ideologies that had previously shaped the household. While the parents, both bilinguals, navigated between Turkish and English in their daily interactions, Ayten, a monolingual Turkish speaker, maintained a more traditional language ideology focused on preserving Turkish. Her insistence on speaking only Turkish with the children reinforced the importance of the heritage language, especially during a period when English was dominant in the household due to the children's schooling and socialisation. Ayten's role in the household's language maintenance offered a contrast to the bilingual practices of the parents, highlighting the continued significance of Turkish in the family's generational language dynamics.

My interview with Ayten shed light on her perspective on language transmission and the importance of Turkish within the family. For her, Turkish was not just a means of communication but a marker of cultural continuity and belonging. Her presence in the home, especially during the lockdown, reinforced the need for Turkish as a daily language, particularly for the children:

Excerpt 1.6.

When Emir was born, and when the twins were born, I was here. Since I only knew Turkish, I always spoke in Turkish with them, reading Turkish books and singing lullabies before bed. Those things were helping them to improve their Turkish and learning our culture. I stayed for six months each year, so when I arrived, the children spoke less Turkish, but by the time I was about to leave, their Turkish was much better. However, everything changed when Emir started school. Once he stopped speaking Turkish, the girls did too. For the last three years, every time I visit, I speak Turkish to them, and they reply in English. I don't understand what they're saying, but they understand me. One day, I almost cried and told my daughter, "At least teach me English." (Online Interview, 28 April 2020, translated from Turkish)

Her determination to speak Turkish with her grandchildren, despite their increasing use of English, reflects her ideology that Turkish language is central to preserving cultural continuity. This aligns with sociolinguistic theories that emphasise language as a repository of cultural values, traditions, and identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005).

Initially, Ayten had control over the language spoken in the family, particularly when the children were younger. Her consistent use of Turkish along with the parents of this family created an environment where Turkish established as home language during her visits. However, when Emir started school and transitioned to English, a power shift occurred. Ayten expresses her emotional response to this change, especially her inability to understand English. This shows how, over time, the children, particularly Emir, enacted agency by choosing to prioritise English, thereby influencing the family's linguistic environment. In the FLP context, this reflects the phenomenon discussed by (Gafaranga, 2010), where children's language choices can shift family dynamics, effectively reversing the expected roles of language transmission. Ayten's grandchildren respond to her Turkish with English, which is a subtle exercise of their agency, shaping the language used at home even when she continues to speak Turkish.

The grandmother's account reveals a form of emotional resistance from her grandchildren. By replying in English, despite understanding Turkish, they are not complying with Ayten's efforts to maintain Turkish. As discussed by Kopeliovich (2013), children can assert their agency through language choices that deviate from parental expectations (Smith-Christmas, 2020). In Ayten's case, her emotional reaction to this shift highlights the tension between her desire to maintain Turkish as a cultural marker and the children's preference for English.

The power dynamics between Ayten and her grandchildren also underscore a typical FLP scenario where younger generations become more proficient in the societal language (English in this case), leading to an inversion of power. Ayten's account, "At least teach me English," demonstrates how her grandchildren's linguistic competence in English enables them more control over the communicative exchange, leaving her feeling isolated. This aligns with the cases where children act as language brokers, taking on a more dominant role in navigating language choice within the family (Smith-Christmas, 2020). Despite the grandmother's efforts to maintain Turkish, the children's agency in choosing English reflects broader themes in FLP research regarding how children can shape linguistic outcomes in multilingual families, often leading to language shifts and emotional tensions within the family. This reflects the idea that linguistic norms within families are co-constructed, with children playing a significant role in reshaping these norms.

One moment that captures the intergenerational language dynamic occurred during a recording made by Yeliz, the mother, in which nine-year-old Emir found himself alone with his grandmother in the living room. The recording was selected and sent to me by Yeliz, the mother, since the grandmother were staying with them during the COVID-19 lockdown. The recording took place in their living room, where the grandmother was knitting and watching TV. Yeliz was moving between the kitchen and the living room, which are connected by a door.

From the recording, it became clear that while Emir set the code of interaction in English, his grandmother's limited English proficiency presented a barrier to communication. At one point, Emir excitedly spotted a fox in the backyard and wanted to share this with his grandmother. Without being able to communicate easily in Turkish, Emir took initiative by opening Google Translate on the PC, using the audio function to translate his message about the fox from English to Turkish.

Excerpt 1.8.

60     Ayten        Ne oldu çocuğum?

(What happened, my child?)

61     Emir         Haven't you seen the fox?

62     Ayten        Yeliz, gel bak ne diyor?

(Yeliz, come here. What is he saying?)

63     Emir         Hold on.

((He types into Google Translate on the PC to get an audible Turkish translation of what he's saying.))

64     Google        Tilkiyi görmedin mi?

Translate       (Haven't you seen the fox?)

65     Ayten        Yok. Hani nerde?

(No. Where is it?)

66     Emir         I saw the fox from my room. It was on the shed in the garden.

((He types into Google Translate while speaking the words out loud, so the translation can be heard as he types.))

67	Google Translate	Tilkiyi odamdan gördüm; bahçedeki kulübenin üzerindeydi. (I saw the fox from my room. It was on the shed in the garden.)
68	Ayten	Aa, dünki tilki mi yoksa?  (Ah, is it the fox from yesterday?)
69	Emir	Uh-huh.

In this excerpt, Emir uses Google Translate to interact with his grandmother Ayten, highlighting a significant instance of both human and non-human interaction and how it intersects with generational ordering in family language practices.

The intergenerational shifts in linguistic repertoires of Emir's Family illustrates how different generations in migrant families navigate multilingual environments, with children often use the dominant societal language, creating communicative challenges within the family.

Despite the language barrier, Emir actively uses technology (Google Translate) to bridge the communication gap. His use of the tool illustrates his agentive role in managing family language practices. Emir's agency is not only linguistic but also technological, as he uses a non-human tool to assert control over the interaction, allowing him to communicate effectively with his grandmother without fully conforming to her language preference.

The use of Google Translate introduces a non-human agent into the interaction, which plays a significant role in mediating communication. This aligns with studies on human and non-human interaction where technology becomes a crucial participant in communication, especially in multilingual contexts. In this case, Google Translate is not just a passive tool but an active part of the conversation, providing audible translations that allow Emir to maintain the flow of conversation with his grandmother. The involvement of Google Translate demonstrates how technological mediation can support

cross-generational communication in bilingual families, effectively altering the dynamics of the interaction. A recent study on human and non-human interaction in the context of FLP shares parallels with Emir's interaction with his grandmother. Roberts's (2023) study of Swedish-English families highlights how human and non-human configurations, particularly inanimate objects (such as Google Translate or smart speaker), mediate family interactions and shape linguistic repertoires.

In Roberts's analysis of the two bilingual families, the toy horse becomes animated through interaction, influencing social norms within the family, while a smart speaker serves as a tool for practicing and engaging with the home language. Similarly, in this excerpt, Google Translate becomes an active participant in the communication between Emir and Ayten, making an otherwise invisible linguistic repertoire (English) accessible to Ayten, who does not speak English. Emir's shift between English and Turkish via Google Translate reveals his agency in drawing on multiple semiotic resources, including technological tools, to achieve effective communication. This can be compared to the father in the Pearce family, who combines English, Swedish, and embodied actions to communicate with his 3-year-old daughter as she plays with the toy horse. Furthermore, Emir's engagement with Google Translate reflects what Roberts (2023, p. 333) refers to as the "thing-power" of inanimate objects, where they become more than passive tools - they actively shape the interaction order. In this case, Google Translate not only facilitates Emir's communication but also enacts a form of technological mediation that aligns with Roberts' notion of non-human entities contributing to linguistic performances. The technological medium (Google Translate and the smart speaker) becomes a crucial participant in the interaction, revealing the fluidity of linguistic repertoires in FLP.

The grandmother's call for Yeliz (Emir's mother) to intervene (line 62) further reflects how she relies on her daughter for interpretation. Emir, in contrast, uses technology autonomously, illustrating the generational shift in how family members manage linguistic and technological resources.

Instead of relying on other family members (like his mother, Yeliz), Emir independently turns to technology to mediate the conversation in line 63. Ayten relies on her daughter Yeliz to help her understand Emir's English, reflecting a traditional intergenerational hierarchy where older generations may expect younger generations (or intermediaries) to

translate for them. However, Emir bypasses this generational hierarchy by directly engaging with technology. His ability to use Google Translate effectively shows how younger generations might possess more digital literacy and linguistic flexibility, which alters the power dynamics within the family. The technological mediation also shifts the power dynamic. Although Ayten holds the social authority associated with being the elder, her reliance on Emir to facilitate communication via Google Translate temporarily inverts the generational power structure. Emir is in control of the interaction because he controls both the technological tool and the language that Ayten does not understand. In this way, the younger generation becomes the linguistic and technological gatekeeper, which is a significant shift from traditional intergenerational roles, where older generations often dominate the familial discourse (Smith-Christmas & Ruiséal, 2022).

This evolving dynamic of language mediation can be further explored through the lens of embodied language learning, particularly in relation to interests such as music.

## **5.6. Embodied Language Learning through Interests in Music**

Just as Emir navigates his linguistic identity through technology, his father, Ali, employs music to engage Emir and his siblings in Turkish. Ali's use of the saz, along with the shared experience of singing traditional songs, serves as a bridge to not only enhance language use but also to influence a sense of cultural belonging. This process exemplifies how language learning transcends mere verbal communication; it becomes a physical and embodied experience that connects children to their cultural heritage. In line with Busch's (2021) argument that children's language ideologies and practices are deeply intertwined with their bodily and emotional experiences as discussed in the theoretical chapter, this interaction with music and language reflects how Emir and his siblings' linguistic practices are shaped not only by cognitive processes but also by embodied experiences. Through this embodied engagement with language, Ali facilitates the development of a multilingual repertoire, where language learning is not just a cognitive or verbal process but is linked to emotional and physical experiences that influence their understanding of cultural identity. By drawing upon their children's interests, whether it is Emir's engagement with technology or Ali's incorporation of music, parents actively shape language practices at home.



**Figure 12.** Emir and his father play a musical instrument called saz.

This interaction illustrates how cultural artifacts, such as songs and musical instruments, can foster lasting connections to language and identity, ultimately enriching the family's linguistic landscape.

Excerpt 1.9.

70 Ali Hadi saz çalmaya başlıyoruz beraber. **Okay? Ready? Three, four. Go!**  
(Let's start playing the saz together.)

71 Emir Okay.  
((starts playing the saz))

72 Emir ((Emir notices that Yeliz records a video of them)) Look! Mom records.

73 Ali **That's OK.** Şimdi beraber söylüyoruz hadi.  
(Let's say it together now.)

74 Ali, Emir ((They jointly sing the song and play saz))  
Telli telli telli şu telli turna  
(Wire-wired-wired-that-wired crane)  
Sanma ki yaralı uçmaz bir daha  
(Don't think that the wounded will never fly again)  
Takılmış kanadı göçmen buluta  
(Its wing stuck on the migratory cloud)

Anlatır eski beni şimdiki bana  
(Tells the old me to the present me)

75 Yeliz Emir şimdi tek söylesin burayı.  
(Emir should now sing this part alone.)

76 Emir ((signs the song while playing saz))  
  
Sanma ki yaralı uçmaz bir daha  
(Don't think that the wounded will never fly again)  
  
Takılmış kanadı göçmen buluta  
(Its wing stuck on the migratory cloud)  
  
Anlatır eski beni şimdiki bana  
(Tells the old me to the present me)

Ali's initiative to engage Emir in playing the saz (a traditional Turkish string instrument) in lines 70 and 73 emphasises the importance of music in transmitting cultural values and language. By encouraging Emir to participate, Ali not only fosters Emir's Turkish language skills but also embeds cultural identity through music. This illustrates how familial practices can use cultural artifacts (like music) to support language use and cultural retention.

Emir's participation, including singing and playing, highlights a playful and interactive learning environment. This shows how children can connect with their cultural and linguistic heritage in enjoyable ways, which might encourage more frequent use of Turkish.

Yeliz's role as the one recording the session suggests a supportive environment where both parents actively participate in language practices. By encouraging Emir to sing solo in line 75, she reinforces his agency and confidence in using Turkish, which is critical for his language development.

The excerpt illustrates translanguaging between Turkish and English, as Emir seamlessly integrates both languages—singing in Turkish while using English phrases (“Look! Mom

records”). Rather than simply switching between distinct linguistic codes, Emir draws on his full linguistic repertoire to navigate the interaction, demonstrating the fluid interplay between his home language and the dominant societal language. This reflects the flexibility and adaptability of bilingual communication, where linguistic resources are strategically used in response to social and contextual dynamics. The lyrics of the song themselves are rich with cultural and emotional meaning. The themes of migration and resilience in the lyrics may resonate deeply within the family’s experience, connecting personal and collective narratives mentioned at the beginning of this section. This kind of cultural expression may provide Emir with a sense of belonging and identity tied to his Turkish heritage.

In her study of a Scottish Gaelic and English-speaking family, Smith-Christmas (2022b) examines the mother’s role in transmitting Scottish Gaelic to her children, highlighting the interplay between her efforts and her son Billy’s linguistic development and agency. The findings indicate that the mother strategically leverages Billy’s love for dogs to enhance his Gaelic language use. Similarly, the excerpt above parallels this family dynamic, where both parents utilize their children’s interests—dogs and music—as pathways to engage them with their respective languages. This discussion can be further expanded to explore how language learning becomes an embodied experience through activities such as playing the saz and singing. It is not just about verbal communication but also about embodied cultural practices that create lasting connections to language and identity. Additionally, it is essential to consider the role of parents in actively shaping language practices at home and how these practices evolve through cultural artifacts like music.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter illuminates the dynamic and multilayered nature of FLP in Emir’s family, underscoring the active role children play in negotiating and reshaping language practices. Emir’s case exemplifies how children’s agency operates at the intersection of societal influences and familial expectations, particularly in multilingual contexts. His preference for English, shaped by his schooling and social environment, challenges his parents’ efforts to maintain Turkish as the home language, leading to a reconfiguration of family linguistic norms.

The analysis also reveals how intergenerational dynamics contribute to FLP. Ayten's insistence on Turkish reflects a more traditional language ideology, juxtaposed with the bilingual strategies of Emir's parents and the children's English-dominant practices. These findings illustrate the fluid and contested nature of FLP, where language ideologies, cultural values, and individual agency converge to produce evolving linguistic landscapes.

By addressing the research questions, the chapter highlights the transformative power of children's language ideologies and practices in shaping FLP, emphasising the need to view children as active agents in the linguistic and cultural life of their families. This discussion contributes to a broader understanding of how multilingual families negotiate identity, belonging, and language use across generations.



# Chapter 6 Data Analysis of Arin's Family

## Arin's Family

### Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse the multilingual dynamics and Arin's agentic roles, drawing on various data sources: Arin's Language Portrait (LP), the parental interview with his mother Bahar, recordings of interactions with both his nuclear and extended family, my fieldnotes, and Arin's online language practices. Arin's Family navigates a rich multilingual environment where Kurdish, Turkish, and English coexist in daily life. Bahar actively encourages the use of Kurdish and Turkish at home, while Arin demonstrates agency by negotiating between these languages and English, depending on the context and his interactions with others.

Arin's LP activity reveals his nuanced self-perception of his linguistic repertoire, showing how he strategically uses his languages. His mother's reflections highlight the family's emphasis on maintaining Kurdish and Turkish as central to their cultural identity, while also adapting to the broader English-dominated environment in school and with peers. Arin's agency is evident in how he makes conscious language choices, particularly in his interactions with family members and friends, subtly influencing the family language practices as he navigates his multilingual and multicultural world.

In the digital sphere, Arin's agency is even more pronounced. His participation in online gaming, streaming platforms like Twitch, and social media offers him new ways to engage with his multilingual identity. He moves fluidly between languages, using Turkish and Kurdish alongside English, and switches languages based on his audience, gaming interactions, or emotional expression during gameplay. By choosing which language to use in different digital contexts, Arin actively constructs and negotiates his identity, demonstrating how digital platforms offer him autonomy in expressing his multilingualism.

### **6.1. Embracing Multilingualism: The Interplay of Kurdish, Turkish, and English**

Bahar, a Kurdish mother in her mid-40s, lives in North London, with her son Arin (11 years old) and daughter Evin (18 years old). The family migrated to the UK over 25 years ago from Southeastern Turkey, a region shaped by the Kurdish-Turkish conflict. Bahar and her late husband, both bilingual in Kurdish Kurmanji and Turkish, sought a better future amidst socio-political instability.

Their migration mirrors the broader movement of Kurdish families from this area, driven by the ongoing conflict between Turkish and Kurdish communities, particularly following the 1980 coup in Turkey. The language Arin's Family speaks, Kurdish Kurmanji, is deeply intertwined with issues of identity and political dynamics within a historically marginalised eastern and southeastern Kurdish ethnic community in Turkey. While Article 10 of the Turkish Constitution promotes equality, it designates Turkish as the sole official language of instruction, rendering the legal status of Kurdish contentious (Yilmaz, 2016). Although some limited provisions exist for Kurdish, such as a Turkish national multilingual TV channel broadcasting in Kurdish (in Kurmanji and Zazaki dialects) and Kurdish language lessons as an additional language in schools, legal barriers continue to hinder the full realisation of Kurdish language rights (Tezcür, 2009). The Constitution also stipulates that no other language may serve as the primary language of instruction, complicating the educational and social integration of Kurdish speakers. The family's journey to the UK, shaped by the socio-political challenges surrounding Kurdish identity and language, has also been marked by personal hardship.

The family has experienced a significant loss, as the father passed away three years ago after a battle with cancer. Following her husband's passing, she took over the family business, a Turkish food market in North London, which she now runs with the help of her brother, Baran (in his 30's), who moved to the UK recently to support her.

The family has settled in Tottenham, North London, an area renowned for its ethnic diversity. They reside in a two-story council house, a home that reflects their working-class background, and is situated in a vibrant part of the city, surrounded by a mix of residential blocks, public transportation hubs, and local businesses. Like many immigrant families, they navigate the complexities of maintaining their heritage while integrating into British society. Arin, for instance, has been attending Turkish language classes at the

local Turkish complementary school (North London Turkish School) for the past two years, while his older sister Evin did not engage in formal Turkish language education.

During my visit to the school, I met Arin (11), who immediately stood out as a tech-savvy preteen, effortlessly navigating both his mobile phone and laptop. He greeted me warmly and demonstrated fluency in Turkish, showing keen interest in participating in the study after learning about it from his mother. Despite his busy schedule, which includes extracurricular activities like football and attending Turkish school, Arin was eager to contribute to the research. Bahar's brother Baran, who lives with the family, was a noticeable and integral presence, actively supporting Bahar and the children. While Arin's Family does not have a grandparent living with them, their extended family, including uncles and aunts who migrated to London long before them, played a crucial role in preparing the groundwork for the family's eventual move. These extended family members remain close contacts, and the family gathers with them frequently, reinforcing the strong kinship ties that support their life in the UK.

This family's home is a vivid reflection of the family's intertwined cultural and religious identities. Upon entering, the act of removing my shoes -a common custom in Turkish, Kurdish, and Muslim families- marked the boundary between the outside world and the intimate space within. The living room itself presented a harmonious juxtaposition of symbols: a decorated Christmas tree stood next to the TV unit, where two ornate Islamic ornaments and seven small elephant figurines, believed to symbolise blessings and abundance, were carefully displayed. Family photos, including the father before his passing and a wedding portrait, added a layer of personal history and memory to the room's aesthetic. This mix of Islamic decor, Anatolian superstition, and Western festive symbols reflects the family's capacity to balance and navigate their cultural heritage and religious beliefs within the diverse social fabric of multicultural London.



**Figure 13.** Arin’s Family’s living room.

After Bahar and Arin’s warm welcome, we discussed the nature of my visits and how we could accommodate them within Arin’s and Bahar’s tight schedule. Once we had agreed on that, we turned our focus to the Language Portrait (LP) task, which would provide insight into Arin’s linguistic repertoire and his perceptions of the languages he uses in his everyday life. This task was particularly interesting in Arin’s case, given his multilingual upbringing in Kurdish, Turkish, and English. By exploring Arin’s LP, I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how he navigates his multilingual repertoire, how he positions himself within these linguistic resources, and what emotional or symbolic significance he attaches to each.

I followed the same protocol for the LP production and interview with Arin as I did with the other participant children from the families in my study. Arin chose to begin his interview in Turkish, though he mentioned that he might switch between languages as we progressed. This decision to fluidly move between his languages is itself a reflection of his multilingual experience, revealing his comfort in navigating the linguistic spaces that reflect his daily life.

## 6.2. Arin's Visual and Verbal Representation of His Linguistic Repertoire



**Figure 14.** Arin's (11 years old) language portrait.

He began colouring the body silhouette with blue, starting from the head, to represent English.

Next, he moved down to the torso of the silhouette, using red to represent Turkish. Before doing so, however, he hesitated for a moment, remarking, “But wait, let me start with Turkish first, because it feels like I speak Turkish more than Kurdish” in Turkish. After this reflection, he continued down to the legs of the silhouette, selecting green to represent Kurdish. Finally, he completed the colouring by choosing turquoise for Spanish on both arms.

Arin's Language Portrait can be analysed through Busch's (2018) concept of spatial metaphors, where participants use an up-down structure in their body silhouettes. By using spatial metaphors in the body silhouette, Arin visually structures his languages in

ways that reflect their roles and meanings in his everyday life, rather than simply ranking them by competence.

Starting with blue for English at the top of the silhouette, Arin connects this language to his head. In many cases, placing a language at the head often signifies the language of thought, reason, or daily functioning in public spaces (Soares et al., 2020).

For Arin, English appears as a key language in his daily interactions outside the home, particularly in school and social settings (line 3). This choice to begin with the head highlights the cognitive and intellectual association he makes with English, a language he likely uses in academic and formal settings such as school. The placement of English in the head also suggests that he perceives it as a dominant language in his thinking and processing, a reflection of its significance in his everyday life in London as well as showing its position in his linguistic repertoire as a practical tool for communication and interaction.

#### Excerpt 2.1.

- |   |             |   |
|---|-------------|---|
| 1 | Interviewer | Bana biraz anlatır mısın?<br>(Can you tell me a little bit about your language portrait?)   |
| 2 | Arin        | Maviyi İngilizce için seçiyorum. Günlük hayatta en fazla İngilizce konuşuyorum.<br>(I choose blue for English. I speak English the most in daily life.) |
| 3 | Arin        | Okulda çok büyük oranda İngilizce konuşuyorum.<br>(At school, I speak English almost all the time.)   |
| 4 | Arin        | Etrafımda bazı Türk ve Kürt arkadaşlarım oluyor.<br>(I have some Turkish and Kurdish friends around me.)  |
| 5 | Arin        | Türkçeyi böyle yaptım çünkü Türkçeyi Kürtçeden daha çok konuşuyorum.<br>(I coloured Turkish like this because I speak Turkish more than Kurdish.)       |
| 6 | Arin        | Kalan yerler de Spanish, çünkü bu dili okulda öğreniyorum.  |

(The remaining areas are for Spanish, because I am learning this language at school.)

7 Arin Zaten en yakın arkadaşlarımdan biri de Kolombiyalı.  
(Besides, one of my closest friends is Colombian.)

When he moves to red for Turkish in the torso, it reflects a language that connects to his emotional and familial core. The torso, often symbolically tied to emotions, warmth, and one's centre, could suggest Turkish's role in his home life, family ties, and heritage (Busch, 2018a). Arin's hesitation before choosing to place Turkish next, instead of Kurdish, shows a moment of reflection about how he positions these languages in his lived experience. Turkish may not just represent communication, but also cultural and relational practices tied to his identity within his immediate family and community.

His account in line 5 "I coloured Turkish like this because I speak Turkish more than Kurdish." suggests a functional hierarchy within his repertoire, where Turkish holds more weight in his day-to-day social interactions, likely influenced by familial and community connections. Kurdish, although present, seems to have a more restricted use, perhaps tied to specific interactions with Kurdish-speaking friends or family members.

For Kurdish, represented by green on the legs, the downward placement does not imply less importance but reflects its specific function in Arin's life. The legs, associated with movement and grounding, might indicate that Kurdish is tied to his roots and cultural heritage, even if it is less present in his day-to-day interactions. Kurdish may symbolise historical connections, ancestral ties, and cultural belonging, anchoring Arin to his Kurdish identity even as other languages play more visible roles in his daily life.

Finally, turquoise for Spanish on the arms suggests a more action-oriented or exploratory function of this language. The arms, as limbs of action and engagement, might indicate that Spanish is a language Arin is acquiring through school, tied to specific activities and external engagements. Arin's mention of Spanish in his language portrait reflects both his formal learning context and his social environment. He identifies the "remaining areas" in line 6 of the silhouette for Spanish, suggesting that it is a less prominent language in

his repertoire compared to English, Turkish, and Kurdish, but still meaningful due to his school studies. His close friendship with a Colombian peer emphasises the social importance of Spanish in his life, linking language acquisition with personal relationships. This highlights how language learning is not just academic for Arin but is intertwined with social dynamics. Spanish, while not as integrated into his daily life as his other languages, still holds a place in his linguistic repertoire because of these interpersonal connections.

Arin's LP illustrates the fluid and evolving nature of his linguistic repertoire. His decisions about where to place each language reflect the different spheres of life where these languages are active, as well as their emotional and cultural associations. This aligns with Busch's (2018) observation that multilingual identities are not static but dynamically constructed through lived experience, where languages are relational and intertwined with personal, social, and cultural meanings.

Although Arin did not explicitly mention it, his choice of colours while structuring the body image might suggest an implicit association between the languages and their respective countries' flags. The blue for English, red for Turkish, green for Kurdish could reflect a subconscious or symbolic connection to the cultural or national identities associated with those languages. Turquoise for Spanish might be less direct but could symbolize the vibrant, diverse cultural associations he has with Spanish-speaking countries, especially through his Colombian friend. These subtle colour choices provide an additional layer to understanding how Arin views his multilingualism -not just through language use, but through cultural affiliations and symbolic representations.

### **6.3. Flexibility in Family Language Practices: Arin's Strategic Agency in Multilingual Negotiations**

This section draws on Language Portrait (LP) data to explore Arin's experiences in navigating his multilingual family environment. Through his linguistic repertoire—Kurdish, Turkish, and English—Arin demonstrates agency in family communication, while his interactions reveal the flexible and dynamic nature of language practices. The data also highlights the role of siblings as linguistic mediators, emphasising how children actively shape their family's multilingual landscape.

Excerpt 2.2.

Kurdish in *italic bold*.

- 8 Arin Annemle Kürtçe konuşuyorum. Ama bazen de annemle Türkçe – Kürtçe karıştırarak konuşuyorum.  
(I speak Kurdish with my mom. But sometimes I mix Turkish and Kurdish when speaking with her.)
- 9 Interviewer Nasıl?  
(How so?)
- 10 Arin Şimdi mesela desem “Anne, Emre *av* dedi”.  
(Like, for example, I could say, “Mom, Emre *av* dedi (Emre said water).”
- 11 Arin Eğer ki annem bana “*Ha?*” dese, “*Ha*” demek yani anlamadım demek,  
(If my mom says *Ha?*” which means she didn’t understand,
- 12 Arin O zaman derim ki “Anne, Emre’ye su verir misin?”  
then I’d say, “Mom, can you give water to Emre?” )
- 13 Arin Ablamla ise İngilizce konuşuyorum. Çok nadir bazı günler biraz Türkçe konuşuyorum.  
(With my sister, I speak English. Only on rare occasions do we speak a little Turkish on some days.)
- 14 Interviewer Ne zaman Türkçeye geçiyorsunuz?  
(When do you switch to Turkish?)
- 15 Arin Annem bizi anlamadığı zaman.  
(When my mom doesn’t understand us.)
- 16 Interviewer Annen İngilizce biliyor mu?  
(Does your mom know English?)
- 17 Arin Annem çok İngilizce bilmiyor.

(My mom doesn't know much English.)		
18	Arin	<p>Annem Kürtçe birşey söylerse ve ben anlamazsam “Anne bunu bana Türkçede de” diyorum.</p> <p>(If my mom says something in Kurdish and I don't understand, I ask her to “Say it in Turkish”.)</p>
19	Arin	<p>Eğer Türkçede de anlamazsam annem İngilizcesini söyleyemiyor ve ablam araya girip o İngilizcesini söylüyor bana.</p> <p>(And if I still don't understand it in Turkish, my mom can't say it in English, so my sister steps in and translates it into English for me.)</p>
20	Arin	<p>Ablam tam Türkçe biliyor. Ben de bayağı biliyorum ama bazen bazı şeylerin Türkçesini bilmiyorum.</p> <p>(My sister fully knows Turkish. I know it quite well too, but sometimes I don't know the Turkish words for some things.)</p>

Arin's accounts reveal several layers of linguistic negotiation and child agency within the context of family language policy in this family. By drawing on the data provided, we can highlight how Arin strategically mobilises his linguistic repertoire in different situations to navigate family interactions.

Arin flexibly employs diverse linguistic resources (Kurdish, Turkish, and English) depending on his communicative needs and the context in which he interacts with his family. His ability to draw on Kurdish and Turkish when speaking to his mother (line 8) demonstrates his linguistic fluidity, reflecting a broader practice of multilingual repertoires common in bilingual or multilingual households (Fogle & King, 2013). Arin's translanguaging in Turkish and Kurdish (line 10) is not just a matter of preference but a pragmatic strategy to ensure communication flows smoothly within his family. Arin's ability to draw from his linguistic repertoire in different contexts—such as incorporating Turkish at home while navigating social interactions in English—aligns with the idea that children's agency is relational (Punch, 2002). His linguistic choices are not purely

autonomous but are shaped by family language policies, social expectations, and the communicative demands of different environments.

Arin's account in lines 10-12 illustrates his agency in deciding how to adjust the language he uses based on his mother's interactional needs. This reflects how speakers, depending on their interlocutors, draw from different parts of their linguistic repertoire, thereby continuously shaping and expanding the family's language policy (Purkarthofer, 2021). This indicates that Arin takes an active role in language management, reshaping the family's language practices in real-time, particularly when the lack of linguistic resources becomes an issue.

As is common in many multilingual transnational families (see Revis, 2016), Arin and his sister have established English as their primary medium of interaction (line 13). However, Arin notes that they switch to Turkish when their mother "does not understand" in line 15. This implies two important aspects. First, the siblings' decision to shift to Turkish suggests that a language policy has been established within the family -perhaps not explicitly stated but gradually formed through a series of interactions. The children's switching to Turkish when their mother does not understand English illustrates how linguistic norms -specifically, the norm of accommodating the mother's linguistic needs- guide their everyday interactions. Over time, these repeated practices contribute to the formation of an implicit FLP, even if it was never explicitly stated. This illustrates that language practices in their home are not rigidly enforced by parents but are instead co-constructed based on situational needs and flexible. This adaptability highlights the role of children in navigating linguistic challenges, a common feature of child agency in FLP, where children actively manage communication by drawing from their multilingual repertoire based on situational needs (Smith-Christmas, 2020). Moreover, as (Revis, 2016) indicates in her Bourdieusian analysis of FLP in refugee families in New Zealand that immigrant children, due to their experiences in school, often acquire linguistic capital faster than their parents and thus find themselves acting as interpreters. In Arin's case, his role as a linguistic mediator reflects a similar dynamic, where the child's linguistic resources and agency become crucial in managing the family's everyday communication. Second, although their mother, Bahar, identifies Kurdish as her mother tongue, the children opt to switch to Turkish rather than Kurdish. This aligns with Arin's top-to-

bottom (up-down) structuring in his LP production, as well as his earlier comment in line 5 from Excerpt 2.1.

Line 18 reveals a significant aspect of Arin's language practices and illustrates how he strategically employs his multilingual repertoire to navigate communication challenges in his family. In line 18, Arin describes how he manages moments of misunderstanding when his mother speaks Kurdish. His request for her to "Say it in Turkish" demonstrates not only his agency in shaping the flow of the conversation but also his awareness of the available linguistic resources in his household. This process highlights a form of language management in which Arin actively decides how to move between languages to ensure the continuity of interaction.

Arin's clarification strategy "Say it in Turkish" here is a clear example of child agency in FLP. Rather than passively adhering to a fixed language practice imposed by his parent, Arin takes control of the interaction by asking his mother to switch languages. This demonstrates his ability to navigate the families' shared multilingual repertoire depending on the situation, thus contributing to the co-construction of language practices in the family.

In line 19, the conversation takes another turn when Arin encounters a second comprehension barrier in Turkish. If communication with his mother cannot be completed in Turkish, his sister steps in as a language broker, translating into English. This collaborative language negotiation shows that Arin's family operates within a flexible, fluid language framework, where members rely on each other's linguistic strengths to resolve communication issues. Arin's reliance on his sister's English proficiency also illustrates his resourceful use of familial support networks, enhancing his own agency by tapping into others' linguistic resources.

Overall, this episode underscores Arin's proactive role in language management, utilising his multilingual skills to navigate and resolve communication breakdowns. His ability to move between languages in his repertoire and enlist the help of others exemplifies the dynamic and flexible nature of family language practices, where children play a pivotal role in shaping the FLP.

Arin's explanation of how his sister steps in to translate for him when he cannot understand Kurdish or Turkish (line 19) demonstrates the pivotal role siblings can play in

family language dynamics. His sister's role as an intermediary between their mother's Kurdish/Turkish and his partial understanding of these languages illustrates the collaborative nature of language practices in multilingual families. The involvement of siblings in facilitating communication highlights the shared responsibility and distributed agency within the family's FLP, where children are not merely passive recipients of parental language choices but active participants in shaping them (Kheirkhah & Cekaite, 2018).

Arin's statements, such as "my sister fully knows Turkish" and "I know it quite well" (line 20), reveal his metalinguistic awareness and his ability to reflect on the different roles languages play within his family's linguistic repertoire. These comments are not just about how well he or his sister uses Turkish, but rather how they engage with it differently in their everyday interactions. Arin's reflection that he sometimes struggles with certain words in Turkish suggests an ongoing process of navigating his multilingual resources. His observations highlight the fluidity of language use in multilingual families, where individuals adapt and negotiate their linguistic choices based on context and interaction. Arin's metalinguistic commentary illustrates how he positions himself and his sister within their shared repertoire, recognising that the use of Turkish, English, and Kurdish shifts according to various factors. Arin's language choices reflect his agency in managing communication within his family, adjusting his linguistic repertoire according to the needs and abilities of different family members. His language portrait not only maps out the languages he uses but also illustrates the active role he plays in shaping his family's multilingual landscape.

Having explored Arin's Language Portrait data, which reveals his perceptions and practices regarding language use, it is essential to consider the broader context of his linguistic environment. His mother's narrative offers valuable insights into the familial and cultural dynamics that shape Arin's language experiences.

In the excerpt below, Bahar reflects on how she navigates a complex interplay of languages and cultural identity. Her account not only reflects her own language journey but also highlights the family's collective approach to language and identity, further illuminating the factors influencing Arin's linguistic choices.

### Excerpt 2.3.

My husband and I were the last ones in our families to migrate to this country. So, when we moved here about 25 years ago, I didn't have much difficulty adjusting. We have a lot of relatives, and we visit each other often. We don't have strict rules at home. Things just developed naturally—at home, we mostly speak Turkish, then a bit less Kurdish, and the least English. The kids usually speak English with each other. It was the same with my siblings' kids too. But when they're with us, they speak a mix of Turkish and Kurdish.

I couldn't go to school at all because of the conflicts in our village in Turkey. I taught myself how to read and write in Turkish. Kurdish is my native language, but I can only speak it. I initially sent Arin to Turkish school just for saz (a traditional instrument) lessons, but last year I enrolled him full-time. His Turkish was already good, but I also want him to be literate in it. It'll help him in school, and if he runs the shop when he's older, he needs to be able to read and write well. I'm not sending him to a Kurdish course because, with the suppression of our language, very few people can actually read and write in Kurdish. (Translated from Turkish, parental interview data, 21 November 2019)



**Figure 6.3.** Arin plays saz.

In analysing the mother's account, key aspects emerge related to her migration experience, family language practices, and the dynamics of linguistic resources in the family. The mother's migration trajectory highlights how her extended family network in the UK provided a buffer during her transition to a new country, allowing for smoother adaptation. As she states, "My husband and I were the last ones in our families to migrate to this country... I didn't have much difficulty adjusting," which reflects how pre-established family ties played a crucial role in mitigating the challenges often associated with migration. The cultural and linguistic continuity is maintained through frequent visits and the use of Turkish and Kurdish within family interactions, reinforcing their shared cultural and linguistic heritage. Moreover, Bahar's insights about her siblings'

experiences provide a critical perspective on the dynamics of language use among children born and raised in the UK. Observing that these children predominantly use English in their interactions highlights the natural progression of language acquisition in an immigrant context, where the dominant language often becomes the primary means of communication among siblings and cousins. This phenomenon reflects a broader social embedding of language practices, as families adapt to the linguistic landscape of their new surroundings while also maintaining connections to their cultural heritage through Turkish and Kurdish. Her decision not to send Arin to a Kurdish language course but instead to focus on Turkish literacy also reflects the broader socio-political context. Kurdish has been historically suppressed in Turkey, and the mother acknowledges this: “With the suppression of our language, very few people can actually read and write in Kurdish.” This highlights the complex power dynamics around language, where the choice of which language to promote within the family is not just a personal or cultural preference but influenced by broader political factors. Thus, external forces such as extended family members can affect language ideologies, practices and management in a nuclear family. As Mirvahedi (2021, p. 405) reminds us “language ideologies, practices, and management in a family do not take place in a social vacuum; rather, they interact with the sociopolitical, historical, and economic realities in which families find themselves”.

Bahar’s decision to enrol Arin in a Turkish complementary school, despite her own Kurdish background, illustrates the influence of socio-linguistic factors on language choices within immigrant families. As highlighted by Curdt-Christiansen and Huang (2020), parents often form beliefs about language based on perceived social value and acceptability. In Bahar’s context, Turkish is positioned as a language of opportunity and prestige, particularly in the context of life in the UK, where proficiency in Turkish can facilitate better educational outcomes with GCSE and A-Level Turkish scores whereas this is not the case for Kurdish language. Moreover, Bahar recognises the importance of Turkish literacy for Arin, emphasising that it will not only aid him in his academic life but also be essential if he chooses to manage their family business, a Turkish grocery shop, in the future. In contrast, her reluctance to send Arin to a Kurdish course speaks to the socio-political realities surrounding the Kurdish language, which is often stigmatised and less supported in the broader society. This decision underscores how external factors,

such as societal attitudes towards language and ethnic identity, can shape parental beliefs and influence the linguistic decisions that children follow.

Consistent with Arin's Language Portrait data framework, Bahar's interview reveals that this family does not adhere to strict home language rules. Instead, the multilingual environment within the household normalises the mixing and creative use of multiple languages. The mother's description of language use at home reflects a natural, fluid multilingualism which suggests a flexible language policy, where language practices are shaped by everyday interactions rather than explicit rules. The mother's experiences and decisions provide insights into how multilingual families manage language transmission across generations, balancing cultural heritage with the demands of a new societal context.

#### **6.4. Challenging Authority: Arin's Strategic Use of English in Family Interactions**

Having explored Bahar's insights and the linguistic dynamics present in Arin's Language Portrait, we can gain further understanding of their shared multilingual repertoire during everyday interactions. A vivid illustration of this dynamic is captured during Arin's birthday celebration, where the richness of their multilingual environment is on full display. In a home setting adorned with the presence of extended family members and cousins, the interplay of languages becomes a natural part of their interactions. Below is an excerpt from the video recorded by Arin's sister, Evin, highlighting how they navigate their shared linguistic landscape in this context.



**Figure 15.** Arin and his mother, Bahar, at Arin's 11th birthday party in their living room.

Excerpt 2.4.

Kurdish in *italic bold*.

Bahar is Arin's mother, Evin is his 18-year-old sister, Rodin is Arin's 12-year-old cousin.

- |    |                   |  |
|----|-------------------|--|
| 21 | Bahar             | ((walking into the living room)) Işığ1 söndür kızım. Hadi, <i>rojbûna te pîroz be Arin</i> .<br>(Turn off the lights, my girl. Let's go, happy birthday Arin.) |
| 22 | Evin              | Hadi çocuklar, <i>rojbûna te pîroz be Arin</i> .<br>(Come on, kids. Happy birthday Arin.)  |
| 23 | Arin's<br>cousins | ((all together)) Happy birthday Arin, happy birthday to you.   |
| 24 | Evin              | No, no. Kurdish, say it in Kurdish.  |
| 25 | Bahar             | <i>Bihêle, ji bîr bike</i> . Öyle söylesinler.<br>(Forget it, forget it. Let them say so.)   |
| 26 | Arin              | Gimme my birthday cake anne.<br>(mom)  |
| 27 | Bahar             | Hadi üfle. Dur ama önce dilek tut.<br>(Come on, blow [the candles]. But wait, make a wish first)   |

28	Bahar	((Arin blows the candles immediately)) <b>Reşo</b> <sup>9</sup> , dilek tutsaydın. (You should have made a wish)
29	Arin	Ya tuttum ya. (But I did make a wish!)
30	Rodin	Come on, you're eleven. I told you, you can cut.
31	Arin	Who?
32	Rodin	I told you, you can cut through that thing.
33	Bahar	((brings a knife to cut the cake and doesn't let Arin to touch it)) Şöyle keseyim çocuklar i- (Let me cut it like this, kids, so th-)
34	Arin	Mom, anne. I'm old, I'm bloody eleven. Let me do it. (mom)
35	Bahar	((sharply)) <b>Bloody! Bloody!</b> Lafa bak, çok ayıp. (Listen to what you're saying, that's very rude.)

The excerpt captures a moment during Arin's birthday celebration, illustrating the interplay of languages, Turkish, Kurdish (Kurmanji) and English- and how they reflect familial relationships, cultural expectations, and the assertion of agency by Arin, who is contributing the shared repertoires of the family.

In line 21, Bahar begins in Turkish with "Işığ1 söndür kızım" (Turn off the lights, my girl) before switching to Kurdish, saying "roj bûna te pîroz be Arin" (Happy birthday Arin). This translanguaging illustrates the bilingual environment where both Turkish and Kurdish are fluidly integrated into everyday interactions. Following her mother's lead, Evin also uses Kurdish to encourage the children to sing the birthday song in line 22. Seven children, all Arin's cousins, were present in the living room along with their mothers, gathered for his birthday party. However, the children did not adhere to the expected code-of-interaction, choosing instead to sing the birthday song in English. While

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<sup>9</sup> In Kurdish, "Reşo" is a common nickname which comes from the word "reş," meaning "black" or "dark" in Kurmanji Kurdish. It is often used as a term of endearment or a personal male name.

the children sang, the mothers remained silent. A critical moment arises in line 24, when Evin requests that the children switch to Kurdish, emphasising the use of one of their heritage languages during the familial celebration. This act reflects a conscious effort to engage with language choice and foster the use of Kurdish, highlighting a subtle negotiation of language ideologies aimed at preserving cultural heritage among the younger generation.

In line 25, Bahar responds to Evin's request for the children to switch to Kurdish with, "Bihêle, ji bîr bike. Öyle söylesinler" (Forget it, forget it. Let them say it [in English]). This response is significant in several ways. First, it shows Bahar's pragmatic approach to language use in a family setting. While Evin's insistence on using Kurdish reflects a desire to reinforce cultural and linguistic continuity, Bahar's reaction suggests a more flexible stance, allowing the children to continue using English.

Bahar's dismissal of the language switch can be viewed as a form of parental agency, shaping the family's language policy in a way that prioritises ease of interaction and children's comfort over the strict enforcement of heritage language use. This moment also demonstrates the complex dynamics of multilingualism in immigrant families, where language ideologies and practices are constantly negotiated. By letting the children sing in English, Bahar implicitly acknowledges the dominant role that English plays in their lives, particularly in peer interactions, while still maintaining a space for both Kurdish and Turkish in other domains. Additionally, Bahar's response downplays the linguistic boundary that Evin attempts to reinforce, emphasising instead the fluid and adaptable nature of the family's linguistic repertoire. It reflects the balancing agentive role immigrant parents often adopt between fostering heritage language maintenance and recognising the inevitable influence of the mainstream language, in this case, English, in their children's everyday lives. In doing so, Bahar subtly negotiates her position between maintaining cultural traditions and adapting to the sociolinguistic realities of their life in the UK.

This sequence illustrates a typical parent-child interaction, where language use and agency are intertwined.

Arin commands, "Gimme my birthday cake anne," blending English with the Turkish word "anne" (mom). This translanguaging, where Arin effortlessly shifts between English

and Turkish, demonstrates his multilingual practice. His use of “anne” highlights the intimate, familial setting, where Turkish is often used for emotional or relational purposes, while English is dominant for functional requests. Bahar’s language choice maintains Turkish as the primary language of interaction. In line 28, Bahar repeats her expectation after Arin blows the candles prematurely: “Reşo, dilek tutsaydın” (You should have made a wish). By using “Reşo,” a Kurdish term of endearment, Bahar signals her affection. This name adds a layer of emotional connection, showing the use of Kurdish for intimate or familial terms. This moment exemplifies how language can carry not only meaning but also familial ties and cultural identity. In line 29, Arin responds defensively, “Ya tuttum ya” (But I did make a wish!). His response is in Turkish, mirroring his mother’s choice of language. Arin’s quick, informal defence, marked by “ya,” a common conversational filler in Turkish, demonstrates his comfort with the language. It also reflects his agency in this exchange -he asserts that he has complied with his mother’s instruction, maintaining some control over the situation, even while Bahar is guiding the interaction.

Line 30 illustrates that his cousin, Rodin, intervenes, encouraging Arin with, “Come on, you’re eleven. I told you, you can cut.” Rodin uses English, reinforcing the dominance of English in peer interactions within the family. The use of English here mirrors the siblings’ usual mode of communication, reflecting the family’s everyday language practices where English is the primary language between children. Bahar’s attempts to use the knife interrupted by Arin.

Arin pushes back, saying “Mom, anne. I’m old, I’m bloody eleven. Let me do it.” Here, Arin blends Turkish (“anne”) with English, using the colloquial and mildly provocative term “bloody” to express his frustration at being treated like a child. This marks an important moment of linguistic and social agency. Arin’s use of “bloody” indicates his growing independence and engagement with English-speaking culture, where such terms are common, especially among peers. His assertiveness in this line highlights his desire to challenge his mother’s control and claim his autonomy, underscoring a dynamic where children, especially as they grow older, negotiate for more independence within family rituals. What is more significant in Arin’s utterance here is that he deliberately uses English for this rebellious act. This deliberate choice of English for his act of rebellion highlights how language becomes a tool for asserting agency, with Arin using English to

push boundaries and negotiate for autonomy within the family setting. English, here, becomes more than just a medium of communication; it is a vehicle for expressing independence and resistance, making his rebellion for challenging the authority.

In line 35, Bahar quickly warns him in Turkish: “Bloody! Bloody! Lafa bak, çok ayıp” (Listen to what you're saying, that’s very rude). Bahar’s sharp response not only criticises Arin for using inappropriate language but also serves to enforce cultural and behavioural norms. Her choice to warn him in Turkish illustrates the use of the home language for corrective or moral guidance, reflecting a traditional parental role in setting boundaries, particularly when children adopt behaviours from outside cultural influences (in this case, the use of English slang). By saying “çok ayıp” (very rude), Bahar reinforces cultural expectations of respect, particularly in language use and in front of the guests, signalling that while Arin’s English proficiency and expressions of independence are acknowledged, they must still align with the family’s cultural values.

In this interaction, Arin's agency is evident in his assertiveness and desire for independence. His insistence on cutting the cake himself and using informal English slang (“bloody”) illustrates his desire to challenge traditional authority and negotiate for more control over his actions. By doing so, Arin exercises his autonomy, embodying his growing sense of self within the family dynamic. His translanguaging in English and Turkish reflects his linguistic flexibility, using English to express frustration and Turkish for relational terms like “anne,” grounding his actions within the familial context.

Bahar, however, reclaims authority by correcting both his behaviour and language. This sequence highlights the ongoing negotiation between children’s agency and parental control within FLP. Bahar’s swift warning signals that while children may have agency in their language choices, there are still boundaries shaped by cultural expectations, especially regarding respect and propriety in language. Thus, this interaction demonstrates how agency is not a linear process but rather a site of negotiation between individual desires and family norms, mediated through language use.

Arin’s multilingual practices fit within the broader family language policy, where Kurdish, Turkish, and English coexist and are used depending on the context. While his mother prefers Kurdish and Turkish, his ability to switch and negotiate between languages reflects his agency, allowing him to navigate the family’s language expectations while

adapting to external environments, such as school and interactions with peers. This dynamic is further illustrated in the following excerpt, where we observe another instance of Arin's language choices shaping his social interactions.

The excerpt I received was recorded by Arin during a picnic held in the communal garden adjacent to his council flat. This setting serves as a shared space for his extended family members to gather, fostering community connections and cultural exchange. As this study prioritises child-centred approach to multilingualism, I encourage the child participants to play a pivotal role in the creation, selection and navigation of the data. In this instance, Arin chose to share emotional yet insightful reflections on his lived experiences and family language practices, highlighting how these practices manifest in a different context—specifically, in a gathering outside the home. The video recording lasts approximately 10 minutes and begins with Arin and his three cousins sitting on the grass in the garden, engaged in conversation about the video games they play, exclusively in English. Shortly thereafter, Arin approaches his mother and two aunts, who are seated a few meters away. The excerpt commences just after Arin reaches his mother's side.

Excerpt 2.5.

36	Bahar	Hadi onu söyle abla. (Come on, sing that dengbeji, sister.)
37	Bermal	<b><i>Guhên nekin Arin. Hele guhên nekin.</i></b> (Don't listen, Arin. Don't listen.)
38	Arin	<b><i>Ji min re bêje çi bû.</i></b> (Tell me what happened?)
39	Bahar	<b><i>Ha?</i></b> (Huh?)
40	Arin	Anne <b><i>ji min re bêje çi bû.</i></b> (Mom, tell me what happened?)
41	Bahar	Hadi canım hadi. (Come on my dear, come on.)
42	Arin	Bak. Erkek Emin savaşı etmiş <b><i>diki bû.</i></b> Sonra, hani Emin <b><i>çû.</i></b>

(Look. The man, Emin, fought. Then, you know, Emin died.)

43	Bahar	<i>Erê.</i> Arin sen Beroşların yanına git hadi. (Okay. Arin, you go to the Beros's side now.)
44	Arin	((walking towards to other side of the garden)) Bero, you said... who went to the pub?

In line 36, Bahar encourages Bermal, Arin's aunt, to sing a *dengbeji*<sup>10</sup> -a traditional form of Kurdish oral storytelling. Bermal hesitates, signalling her concern for Arin's emotional state, as the song recounts a man's death, a sensitive topic due to Arin's recent loss of his father. This reveals how language and cultural practices in the family are intertwined with emotional considerations, especially in how they are mediated through language choices to protect children from distress. In turn, Bermal explicitly addresses Arin, saying, "Guhên nekin Arin. Hele guhên nekin" (Don't listen, Arin. Don't listen), attempting to exclude him from hearing the content of the song. Here, Bermal's use of Kurdish reinforces the familial and cultural context, marking Kurdish as the language of heritage and emotional depth in line 37.

Yet, Arin's response in line 38, "ji min re bêje çi bû" (Tell me what happened), immediately challenges this exclusion. This act of questioning reflects Arin's agentive resistance to the adults' language and content management strategies.

Arin's repeated questioning in line 40 ("Anne ji min re bêje çi bû") further exemplifies his persistence. The use of Kurdish here is significant; by continuing in Kurdish, Arin is aligning himself with the language of the ongoing interaction, positioning himself as an active participant within this particular interactional code. His agency manifests not only in his refusal to be excluded but also in his active language negotiation, engaging the adults on their terms.

Bahar's response in line 41, "Hadi canım hadi" (Come on my dear, come on), signals a shift in the interaction. Bahar appears to divert Arin's attention instead of directly

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<sup>10</sup> The Kurdish word 'deng' translates to [voice] and 'bej' means [present tense of gotin, to tell]. *Dengbêjs* recount lengthy narratives and epics centered on love and war, with their mournful \*stran\* (songs) recognized as the most famous and beloved among them all.

answering his question, possibly to maintain the family's protective stance. Despite this, Arin continues his attempt to participate by making an effort to understand the situation, as seen in line 42 where he pieces together the narrative of the song: "Bak. Erkek Emin savař etmişdiki bû. Sonra, hani Emin çû." (Look. The man, Emin, fought. Then, you know, Emin died.).

This utterance illustrates that Arin strategically uses Kurdish to navigate the adult discourse among his mother and aunts in mainly in Kurdish. In line 42, Arin continues with a fragmented but meaningful explanation in a mix of Turkish and Kurdish: "Bak. Erkek Emin savař etmişdiki bû. Sonra, hani Emin çû" (Look. The man, Emin, fought. Then, you know, Emin died). He actively engages with the content, drawing on his entire linguistic repertoire to make sense of and explain the situation, which is implicitly about the loss and mourning through *dengbeji*.

Bahar's response in line 43, where she attempts to redirect Arin's attention in Turkish by asking him to rejoin his cousins, suggests that she wants to protect him from dwelling on the emotionally charged content and highlights a deliberate linguistic shift. The use of Turkish in this context may signal an attempt to create emotional distance, steering Arin away from the heavy themes of the conversation. This switch suggests that while Kurdish serves as the language of familial intimacy and shared cultural narratives, Turkish may assume the role of authority or management within the family dynamics. This nuanced use of language underscores its ideological and affective functions, shaping both relational and interactional boundaries.

In line 44, Arin's abrupt shift to English as he moves away from the group - "Bero, you said... who went to the pub?" - is another instance of translanguaging, illustrating a shift in the social and interactional context. This switch from Kurdish and Turkish to English demonstrates Arin's ability to negotiate contextual appropriateness based on his interlocutors and the subject matter. By switching to English to address his cousin, Arin aligns himself with his peer group, further illustrating his linguistic agency in determining how and when different languages are used.

## **6.5. Creating multilingual contents in digital space: Arin's Video Gaming**

Understanding how multilingual young people perceive themselves, both as individuals and within their family, school, and social environments, is crucial for exploring their multilingual identities (Little, 2020). In Arin's case, his everyday language practices illustrate the complexity of balancing his family's home languages with the broader linguistic environment he encounters outside. Like many children in immigrant families, Arin actively shapes the language dynamics within his household. Immigrant communities, far from being homogeneous, consist of individuals who skilfully juggle multiple linguistic and cultural identities (Hatoss, 2020).

When transitioning into digital spaces, multilingual children further extend their linguistic repertoires. Arin, like many others, uses mobile digital technology to interact and create multilingual content, actively constructing and negotiating his multilingual identity within these digital contexts. With the Internet becoming increasingly multilingual, opportunities for multilingual children to express and develop their language skills are growing. However, the prevalence of online languages and varieties has introduced new complexities (Kern, 2014). Accessing the different modes of digital space increases by age and children brings their own creativity and power into digital environment.

This became particularly evident during my third visit to Arin's home, where I had the opportunity to observe how his daily interactions with peers, family, and technology blend to reflect his multilingual practices. In this section, I share an excerpt from my field notes taken during my third visit to Arin's home. The visit provided an opportunity to observe Arin's interactions with peers, family, and technology, highlighting how his multilingual practices extend into his digital environment. The following account offers a snapshot of Arin's daily life, reflecting the blending of languages, social dynamics, and digital engagement.

"I stand in front of the Chinese takeaway next to Arin's flat, waiting for our agreed meeting time. The street is familiar now, with the steady rhythm of everyday life in this North London neighbourhood. A few minutes pass, and I see Arin approaching with two of his best friends, fresh from their football club practice. He spots me, waves, and smiles as they come closer.

When they reach me, Arin introduces me to his friends as "abla" (big sister), explaining that I'm doing research on languages at a university. His friends seem curious, and one of

them -who I later realise is the Colombian friend Arin mentioned in his Language Portrait-enthusiastically tells me that he speaks many languages. I express my interest and ask which ones. He lists English, Spanish, and a bit of Portuguese, before joking that he's learned all the bad words in Kurdish and Turkish from "these guys," motioning toward Arin and their other friend, Adem. The conversation shifts, and the boy adds, "This is Tottenham, you hear a million different languages in one day. No English lives here."

After this brief exchange, Arin and I make our way to his flat, where his mother, Bahar, is waiting for us. I've noticed before that when I'm around, Bahar tends to speak only in Turkish, perhaps assuming I don't understand Kurdish. However, I've observed in the video recordings she's shared with me that she often switches between Kurdish and Turkish in her everyday conversations with Arin and other family members.

Arin heads upstairs to change out of his football clothes and returns with his laptop in hand, excited to show me something. "I want to show you my online gaming," he says, explaining that it's connected to the different languages he uses while playing. (Field note, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020)"

In the excerpt below, Arin explain how he engages with his different languages and registers in an online video game streaming platform, Twitch.

#### Excerpt 2.6.

English is in **bold**; Kurdish is in *bold italic*.

45 Arin Ben oynadığım oyunları kaydedip **video editing** yapıyorum.  
(I record the games I play and do video editing.)

46 Arin Çok seviyorum bununla vakit geçirmeyi. 3 saat falan günlük oynuyorum.  
(I really like spending time with it. I play it for about 3 hours a day.)

47 Interviewer Neler yapıyorsun mesela?  
(What do you do, for example?)

48 Arin Arkadaşlarımla **channellarını subscribe** yapıyorum.  
(I subscribe to my friends' channels.)

49 Arin Roblox oynuyordum eskiden. Rakibim oluyor. Genelde İngilizce konuşuyorum

(I used to play Roblox. With an opponent in the game I usually speak English.)

50	Arin	Bu laptopu, <b>birthday present</b> , aldıktan sonra Twitch'te yayın yapmaya başladım. (I started streaming on Twitch after having this laptop as my birthday present.)
51	Arin	Diğer dillerimi, Türkçe ve Kürtçe konuşan bazı <b>follower</b> larım var, oyun sırasında bu dillerle oynamayı gerçekten seviyorum. (I've some viewers who speak my other languages, Turkish and Kurdish, and I really like to play with these languages during the game.)
52	Interviewer	Mesela? (For instance?)
53	Arin	Yani oyunda otomatik olarak Türkçe veya Kürtçe <b>reaction</b> verdiğim zamanlar oluyor. (For instance, there're some times in the game that I react in Turkish or Kurdish automatically.)
54	Arin	Öyle <b>reaction</b> verince, mesela "Oh be, <b>çû</b> , <b>I killed the guy</b> " deyince <b>follower</b> larım daha çok seviyor. (When I give a reaction like that, for example saying, "Oh man, done, I killed the guy", my followers like it more.)

Games-based technologies and digital platforms are increasingly being integrated into family life, offering opportunities for playful engagement with heritage languages and literacy. However, there is still limited understanding of how multilingual families utilise these technologies to support their linguistic repertoires (Little, 2019). These tools provide a space for children to actively construct and express their multilingual identities, which they may not have openly acknowledged before. For example, apps, video games, and platforms like Skype and YouTube have become embedded in daily family routines, forming part of the family's semiotic practices for communication, information-seeking, and entertainment (Said, 2021). Rather than disrupting traditional time spent within the home, technology now complements these practices, offering children ways to explore and engage with different cultural experiences and languages. Online language use, in particular, reframes linguistic repertoires as semiotic practices unique to each individual (Adami, 2017).

Arin's engagement with digital platforms like Twitch, as described in the excerpt, provides a clear example of how games-based technology facilitates playful and creative interaction with his multilingual repertoire. In lines 45-54, Arin discusses his involvement in video editing, streaming on Twitch, and interacting with his followers in various languages. The digital space allows Arin to move fluidly between languages like English, Turkish, and Kurdish, responding to the diverse linguistic background of his audience. This dynamic use of his multilingual repertoire in digital contexts can be connected to Oswell's (2013) argument that children actively shape family structures in an increasingly digital world, where their linguistic practices are influenced by their interactions in virtual spaces.

In line 49, Arin mentions speaking English while playing Roblox, illustrating how he uses the dominant societal language in competitive gaming settings with his opponents. This aligns with how children often use the dominant language to navigate social contexts outside the home, such as school or peer interactions. However, Arin also values opportunities to use Turkish and Kurdish, especially when interacting with viewers who speak these languages. In line 51, he expresses enjoyment in using his heritage languages during games, highlighting how technology offers a unique space for heritage language use that may not always be as readily accessible in other environments. Arin's comment in line 54, where he describes how his followers react positively to him switching between languages, shows how digital platforms allow for the active performance of multilingualism, reinforcing his identity as a speaker of multiple languages. Thus, technology serves as a tool through which Arin not only maintains his home languages but also creatively engages with them in a way that resonates with both his peers and his digital audience. His ability to seamlessly navigate across his linguistic repertoire in digital spaces underscores how such technologies enable the performance and shaping of multilingual identities.

For multilingual children like Arin, the digital world offers a platform to actively engage with their linguistic repertoires, blending heritage languages with dominant ones like English in creative and meaningful ways. Technology has become a key tool for transmitting cultural and linguistic knowledge, bridging generational gaps and offering new modes of expression.

Arin's reflections on language transmission in his family further illustrate these dynamics. While he expresses a strong desire to teach Kurdish and Turkish to his future children, he is also aware of the practical dominance of English and Turkish in his social environment. This tension between maintaining heritage languages and adapting to societal linguistic norms is echoed in his approach to language use in both physical and digital spaces:

In the future, I would teach my children these languages as well. I would probably speak more English, but I would still teach them Kurdish and Turkish. There are some kids, for example, who regret not learning Kurdish. There was this one kid who said, 'I regret not learning Kurdish.' His mother used to teach him, but he would just speak Turkish with her. He only learned a little bit -like how to say 'Çavani başi' (How are you doing?). So that, I would want to teach these languages. Usually, people learn Turkish, but they learn less Kurdish.

I asked him why he thinks that is, and he replied:

Well, if you know Kurdish, you also know Turkish already. But even if you only speak Turkish and not Kurdish, you can still understand others.

In this account, Arin reflects on the significance of teaching Kurdish and Turkish to future generations, recognising that many children from Kurdish-speaking families regret not learning Kurdish when given the opportunity. This perspective highlights his awareness of the linguistic tensions that exist within his community, where Turkish dominates as the national language, but Kurdish carries cultural and familial significance.

The manifestation of power imbalances reveals that language operates as an ideological tool, where certain languages are classified as "standard," "nonstandard," or "dialect," often tied to political agendas. These classifications can designate languages as legitimate or illegitimate, or even render them "non-existent," as was the case with Kurdish in Turkey until recent changes in the last two decades. Such labels are politically charged, reinforcing social hierarchies and assigning higher or lower status to different groups (Yilmaz, 2016).

In Arin's case, his reflections on teaching Kurdish and Turkish to his future children underscore this dynamic. He recognises that Kurdish is less commonly learned compared to Turkish, partly due to its historical marginalisation. Arin notes that even within Kurdish families, children who fail to learn Kurdish may later regret it, feeling disconnected from their heritage when returning to their roots. His comments illustrate how political and social contexts shape language learning, influencing which languages are valued or

neglected. Arin's intention to teach both Kurdish and Turkish to his future children is an expression of his agency in preserving his heritage languages. Arin's agency in wanting to pass down both Turkish and Kurdish reflects his awareness of these power structures, and his desire to preserve both languages within his future family. Aligning with his mother's account in the excerpt 2.3, he also sees the emotional and cultural value of Kurdish, despite its reduced prevalence, especially among younger generations. His anecdote about a child regretting not learning Kurdish demonstrates the internal conflict that many children from bilingual backgrounds face when growing up in a context where Turkish overshadows Kurdish. When asked why Kurdish is less learned, Arin's response reflects the practical reality as stated in his mother's account that many Kurdish speakers also know Turkish, and the societal dominance of Turkish means it becomes the default language of communication even in Kurdish-speaking communities in the UK. His remark that "even if you only speak Turkish, you can still understand others" highlights how Turkish's power can overshadow the need to actively learn and use Kurdish in everyday contexts.

Arin's Family highlights the intersection of heritage language maintenance and individual agency within a multilingual framework. Arin's agentive roles emerge as a central theme, particularly in his ability to influence family language practices, engage peers across linguistic boundaries, and navigate his digital environments. This chapter underscores how both family and digital spaces shape Arin's evolving multilingual identity, allowing him to exercise autonomy in how, when, and where his languages are used.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the analysis of Arin's family illuminates the intricate interplay of languages in a multilingual household, shaped by cultural, social, and political factors. Arin emerges as an agentive multilingual, skilfully navigating between Kurdish, Turkish, and English to meet the demands of his environment. Through the Language Portrait (LP), family interactions, and his engagement in digital spaces, Arin's linguistic practices highlight how multilingual children actively shape family language policies, negotiate their cultural identities, and adapt to diverse communicative contexts. The findings underscore the fluidity of multilingualism and the importance of digital and familial domains in constructing and expressing multilingual identities. Arin's story reflects

broader dynamics of heritage language maintenance, child agency, and adaptation within immigrant families, contributing to an understanding of the lived experiences of multilingual youth.



# **Chapter 7 Data Analysis of Omer's Family**

## **Omer's Family**

### **Introduction**

The focus of this data analysis is centred on the children, with further exploration extending to other family members, as the primary aim is to investigate children's agentive roles in family language policy (FLP). The linguistic practices within Omer's family reveal a complex interplay between tradition and adaptation. While the grandmother's insistence on Turkish-only FLP, the children's multilingual identities emerge through acts of negotiation and agency. Omer and his younger sibling, Remzi, actively navigate the family's language policy through practices such as translanguaging. This bilingual negotiation is further reflected in the children's language portraits (LPs) and scrapbook data, which illustrate the nuanced ways they perceive and experience their multilingual identities. These visual and narrative data illustrate the children's ability to actively shape and respond to their linguistic environments.

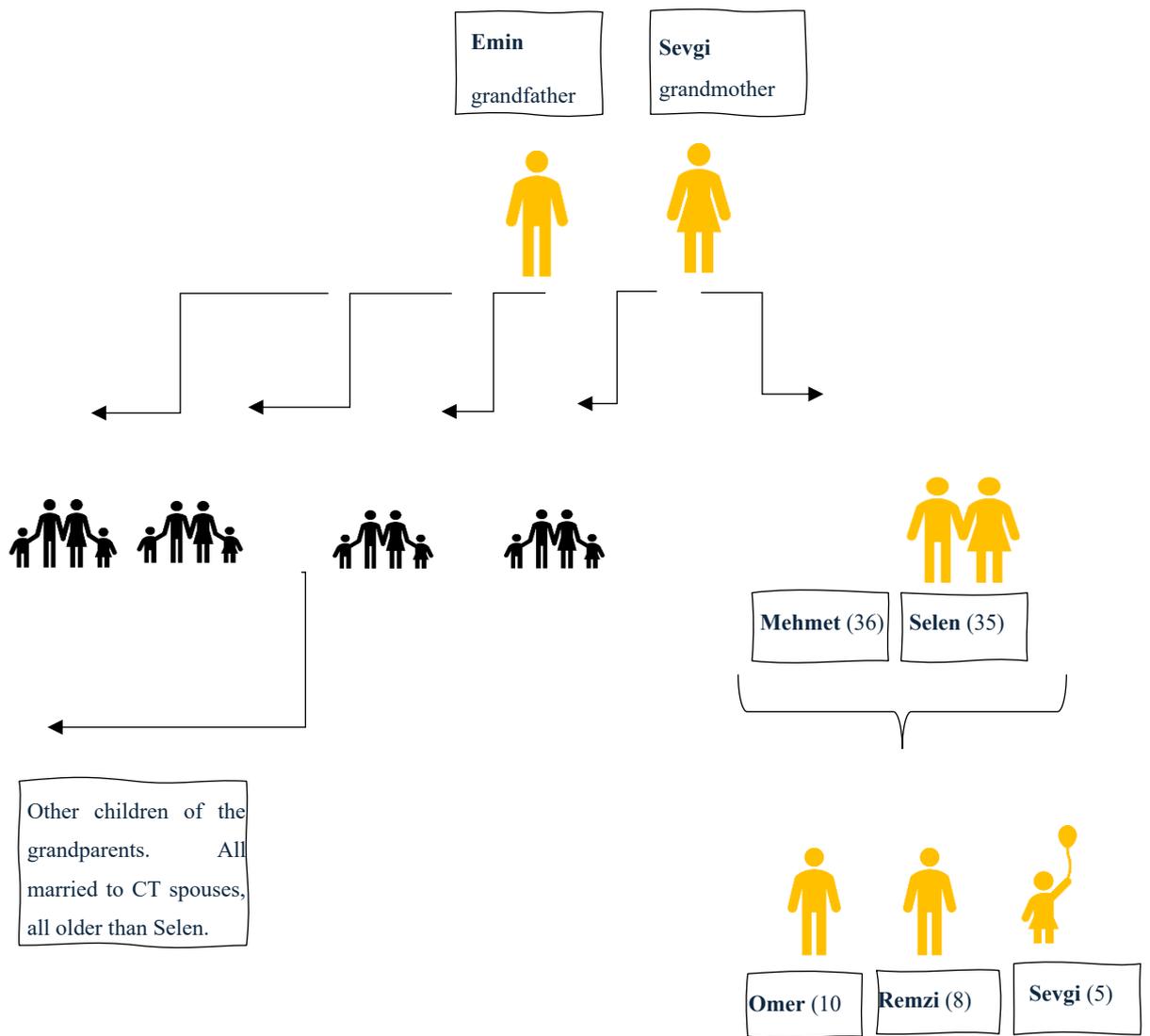
The family's engagement with Turkish complementary schools provides additional insights into their FLP and its connection to cultural identity. These schools function as crucial hubs for transmitting cultural values, fostering community ties, and maintaining the heritage language in a multicultural context. Together, these elements make Omer's Family a compelling example of how FLP operates at the intersection of tradition, agency, and adaptation.

### **3.1. Family Background and Generational Dynamics**

The family comprises the maternal grandparents, mother Selen, father Mehmet, and their three children: Omer (10 years old), Remzi (8 years old), and Sevgi (5 years old). The grandparents migrated to the UK from Northern Cyprus approximately 50 years ago, working as blue-collar labourers in factories. They raised five children, all of whom were born in Britain, with Selen being the youngest. For the past twelve years, the three generations—the grandparents, parents, and children -have lived together in a three-story detached house in North London. Both the grandparents and parents identify as Cypriot Turkish.

Having settled in a neighbourhood dominated by Turkish-speaking communities in the mid-1960s, the grandparents initially faced challenges due to their limited English skills. They found employment through connections within the Cypriot Turkish community, but they placed a strong emphasis on ensuring their children received a quality education and became bilingual. Selen and her siblings were notably successful in their educational journeys in the UK, and like her children today, they attended Turkish complementary schools on weekends.

Selen and Mehmet have known each other since their school-age years at the Turkish complementary school, where they developed a bond that eventually led to their marriage twelve years ago. Additionally, Selen volunteers at the North London Turkish School's canteen, where all three of their children attend on Saturdays. Sevgi, the grandmother, accompanies her grandchildren to the Turkish Saturday school, continuing a tradition she started years ago when she brought her own children. While the children attend their lessons in the classrooms, Sevgi socialises with other Turkish-speaking parents in the school canteen, maintaining strong connections within the community.



**Figure 16.** Omer's family tree

### 3.2. Setting the Scene: Family Language Policy of Omer's Family

Omer's family practices an explicit home language policy centred around maintaining Turkish as the primary language of communication within the household. This policy has been consciously reinforced by the grandparents, particularly the grandmother, who, as highlighted in interviews with both the children and caregivers (parents and grandparents), has established a "Turkish-only" rule at home. This approach reflects the family's commitment to preserving their linguistic and cultural heritage across

generations, an effort rooted in their identity as Cypriot Turkish and their historical experiences of migration and community building in the UK. The grandmother's active role, such as accompanying her grandchildren to Turkish complementary school and maintaining social ties within the community, exemplifies her deliberate efforts to support their connection to the Turkish language and culture.

Despite the "Turkish-only" rule enforced within the home, moments of flexibility arise when the children feel the need to switch languages for comfort or self-expression. This dynamic was evident during my first visit to the family's home, where I observed how the grandmother's role as a linguistic gatekeeper reinforces Turkish as the dominant language within the household. However, interactions like Omer's preference for English during the interview illustrate the nuanced ways in which the children negotiate these policies and assert their agency over language choice. The following fieldnote captures this interaction:

Since I arrived at their home a bit late, I wanted to start the interview with the children as soon as possible, considering that they might go to bed earlier than other family members. I shared this concern with Selen Hanım, who agreed and left me with the older child, Omer, in the living room. From our brief conversation, I sensed that Omer was comfortable speaking in both Turkish and English. However, I told him he can use the language he preferred for the interview, assuring him that switching between languages or using mixed language was also fine.

He then looked perplexed and mentioned that one rule which has been set up by his grandmother of 'speaking only Turkish at home'. I did not expect him to express such a dilemma and needed to see how he exercised his agency over language choice. To make him feel more at ease, I told him that he could speak in whichever language(s) he preferred during the interview, making it an exception to the rule. After a brief hesitation, he said he felt more comfortable continuing in English.

I then explained that I would be recording his voice, and I noticed he seemed distracted when he saw the recorder on the coffee table. To help him relax, I moved the recorder out of sight, which seemed to make him more comfortable, and we proceeded with the interview. (Fieldnotes from 1st home visit, 24/11/2019)

This interaction highlights the balancing act between adhering to family-imposed language policies and accommodating the children's comfort and preferences. It also underscores the children's ability to navigate and occasionally challenge these policies in ways that reflect their linguistic needs and social contexts. I delve deeper into these dynamics in the following section, where Omer's Language Portrait (LP) task provides further insights into how he perceives and experiences his linguistic repertoire, providing a vivid example of how children in multilingual, intergenerational families negotiate the boundaries of language policies.

Through an analysis of the Language Portraits (LPs) data, we can uncover how the children in Omer's family perceive and express their linguistic repertoires, how they engage with the varieties of Turkish spoken at home and in the school, and how their everyday language practices shape and are shaped by their broader linguistic environment (Wilson, 2020). This exploration offers deeper insights into the ways children contribute to the transformation, maintenance, or adaptation of their family language practices, addressing the core questions of this study.

In Language Portrait (LP) research, participants create narratives -either verbal or written- by explaining or commenting on what they draw and/or colour on the portrait (Busch, 2018a). Drawing on previous studies that use LP as a methodological and analytical tool (Botsis & Bradbury, 2018; Busch, 2018a; Kusters & De Meulder, 2019; Soares et al., 2020), I apply it as part of my ethnographic study to explore the language practices, choices, motivations, and language ideologies of children from Turkish-speaking families in London.

Building on Busch's (2018) approach, I investigate several key aspects through LP analysis. These include: what participants think about the languages they currently use, have used in the past, or wish to use in the future; how their agency manifests in their engagement with these languages; how they associate their language use and ways of speaking with specific individuals or contexts; and how they feel about these associations. Additionally, I examine how participants attribute colours to different languages or registers and how they connect these to specific parts of the body in their portraits.

By situating my study within this established LP framework, I aim to uncover how the children negotiate their linguistic repertoires and express their multilingual identities.

This approach allows me to analyse the interplay between language, emotion, and identity, as well as the ways in which the participants' choices reflect their lived experiences and agency in their sociolinguistic contexts.

In the following section, I analyse the Language Portraits created by the child participants, Omer and Remzi. Unfortunately, I was unable to conduct a Language Portrait with the youngest child, as she was only five years old and less able to engage with the task meaningfully.

This study focuses on analysing body images in the Language Portraits through the metaphors structured by the participants, which are reflected in how they draw and colour body parts or position languages within the spatial representation of the body. Drawing on Busch's (2018) framework, common metaphors include the head as a site of reason and cognition, the heart as a symbol of emotional intimacy, and the hands as representative of social activity. Spatial positioning within the portrait—such as above versus below or larger versus smaller—can suggest the relative familiarity or importance of particular languages to the participant.

The interpretation of these portraits relies heavily on the participants' narratives, as metaphors and visual choices acquire meaning when contextualized within their accounts. For example, colours chosen by participants can carry a range of significances, including symbolic, emotional, socio-cultural, or personal associations. Thus, the children's explanations provide crucial insights into their decisions, making their narratives an integral part of the analysis.

As I demonstrate in the subsequent analysis, Omer and Remzi structured their Language Portraits in ways that align with these metaphorical and spatial patterns, revealing how they negotiate and express their linguistic repertoires, emotional connections, and social interactions through the task.

### **3.3. Analysis of Omer's Language Portrait**

Omer (10 years old) is the eldest child of this family. As the protocol I follow for LP production task (see Chapter 4, 4.3.3.1 Language Portraits), I give flexibility to the children to use their entire linguistic repertoire and highlight that they can speak in any language they want, they can switch between languages and different modes. Omer

decided to speak English during his LP production interview, except the times that he referred to something related to cultural references or kinship terms in Turkish (e.g., there is a different word for a maternal uncle in Turkish- '*dayı*').

In previous studies on Language Portraits (LPs), certain body parts are commonly linked to specific languages to represent their emotional significance or frequency of use. Typically, the head and torso are associated with dominant or emotionally significant languages, often those that are central to a person's identity or are used more frequently. In contrast, the legs, situated farther from the torso, tend to represent less used languages or those that are perceived as more distant. Colours also play a key role in this representation; for instance, languages that are considered emotionally significant are often marked with warm colours like red, while languages that are less emotionally tied might be represented with cooler colours like blue or green (Coffey, 2015; Salo & Dufva, 2018; Singer & Harris, 2016).

In Omer's Language Portrait (Figure 16), his colour choices and the placement of languages on the body reflect this core-to-periphery pattern. He begins by colouring the head and torso red for Turkish, signifying its central role in his linguistic repertoire and identity. This is consistent with the literature, where languages placed in these central parts are often dominant or have a strong emotional connection. However, Omer diverges from the typical pattern when he assigns blue to represent English on the raised hand, an area that is often used for languages that are important but perhaps secondary. Additionally, he places French in the left leg, a position generally reserved for languages that are less commonly used, and Spanish in the other leg, further reinforcing the peripheral status of these languages in his repertoire. These choices suggest a nuanced understanding of Omer's relationship with his languages, where Turkish occupies the core of his identity, while English, French, and Spanish are placed in more peripheral roles, though still part of his linguistic landscape.



**Figure 17.** Omer's Language Portrait

In his narrative, he explained his structuring of body silhouette in this way:

Excerpt 3.1

My main language is Turkish and then English. And then, French and Spanish. I'm in Year 6 now. I had Spanish lessons when I was in Year 3 (from Year 1 to Year 3). So, after my Spanish teacher left, they got a teacher who speaks French. Since then, we have been doing French.

In stating, "My main language is Turkish and then English," Omer establishes a clear hierarchy in his linguistic repertoire. Turkish, being positioned as the primary language, indicates its foundational role in his identity, likely linked to familial and cultural ties. The acknowledgment of English as the second language suggests its importance in Omer's daily life, particularly in a school setting, where it functions as the medium of instruction and social interaction.

Omer’s account during the LP activity reveals significant insights into how he conceptualises language in relation to national identity and symbolism through the choice of colours. Omer’s question, “Do I need to do the colours of the flag?” in line 1 indicates an awareness of the symbolic connection between colours and national identity. This inquiry suggests that he views language not just as a means of communication but also as a marker of national affiliation. In this respect, language is associated with the nation through the quintessential symbol of the nation. The excerpt highlights how children may conceptualise language through the lens of national identity, as supported by the findings in Soares et al. (2020) and Melo-Pfeifer (2015).

Excerpt 3.2.

1	Omer	Well, wait! Do I need to do the colours of the flag?
2	Interviewer	Oh, it’s up to you.
3	Omer	What is the French flag?
4	Interviewer	Do you mean the colour? It’s red, white and blue like the British flag. I can show you.
5	Omer	Because I used red, and I used blue...So, should I just leave this bit white?
6	Interviewer	Well, you can choose another colour if you like, there are many colours in the palette.
7	Omer	Okay, green then.

Omer’s narrative in the excerpt below provides significant insights into his multilingual language use and the social dynamics surrounding it. He explains it this way:

Excerpt 3.3.

8 Omer Sometimes we speak (Turkish), but we don’t actually speak... So that,

- 9 Omer when we go out the house, we start speaking English. When we go to the school, everyone else also speaks English.
- 10 Omer I have one more Turkish friend and he speaks Turkish as well. But he is from Turkey.
- 11 Omer We speak a little bit and we teach other people to speak Turkish.
- 12 Interviewer What kind of words you're teaching them?
- 13 Omer Well. **Merhaba, Nasılsınız? İyi misiniz?** kind of stuff, you know.  
(Hello, how are you? Are you alright?)
- 14 Omer If we speak something else, they want to understand. They don't stop saying to us "Could we speak that? Could we learn that?" Yeah.

Omer's statement, "Sometimes we speak (Turkish), but we don't actually speak..." (line 8), reflects the permeable boundaries between his home language and the language of the wider community. The phrase "we don't actually speak" suggests that while Turkish is present in his home, it may not be actively engaged with to the extent that English is outside the home environment. In line 9, Omer articulates that when he goes outside, he "starts speaking English" because "everyone else also speaks English." This highlights the strong influence of social context on language choice. Omer's decision to adopt English reflects the necessity of adapting to his environment, demonstrating how bilingual children often navigate multiple linguistic environments.

Omer's language use reveals how his linguistic repertoire is shaped by both familial practices and external social dynamics, with language choices varying depending on context and the need to align with others. This adaptability underscores the fluid nature of bilingualism, where language use is often context-dependent.

In Omer's statement about having "one more Turkish friend," he specifically highlights that this friend is "But from Turkey" (line 10), which can be seen as more than a simple reference to nationality. The emphasis on "but" suggests an awareness of, and perhaps even a distinction between, different forms of Turkish. While Omer acknowledges his friend's Turkish identity, the use of "but" may implicitly reveal underlying ideologies or

perceived differences between Turkish speakers from Turkey and those, like himself, who speak Cypriot Turkish.

This subtle distinction may point to an implicit dichotomy between Standard Turkish and Cypriot Turkish, a non-standard variety. Omer's choice to highlight this friend's origin hints that he is conscious of the variations in language use and cultural background between Turkish speakers from Turkey and Turkish Cypriots like himself. This distinction could reflect broader societal norms regarding linguistic prestige, where Standard Turkish, as spoken in Turkey, is often regarded as the "correct" or more authoritative form of the language, while Cypriot Turkish may be seen as less prestigious or even stigmatised (Çavuşoğlu, 2021). Such norms are shaped by national identity politics, media portrayals, and educational systems, which often position Standard Turkish as the dominant variety. Omer's recognition of these differences likely reflects these wider societal influences on his language ideologies.

### **3.3.1. Generational Language Practices: Strategies of Parents and Grandparents**

In the visual and verbal description of Omer's language experiences during the drawing of the language portrait, three major themes emerge. These are the parents and grandparents' strategies to maintain the home language, the strategies to achieve his own agency, and discourses involving his multilingual and multicultural identity. It is worth noting that Omer does not distinguish between standard and Cypriot Turkish in his oral narrative.

While Omer (10 years old) was drawing on the body silhouette, we discussed how he interacts with his multi-generational family. In his account, it is revealed that Omer's parents' and grandparents' discourse strategies towards him differentiate. He described his interactions with his mother and father as being not so strict about speaking the home language (Turkish). "My parents reply mostly in Turkish if I speak English," he said. According to Lanza (2004), this practice is called 'move-on strategy' which is a non-constraining strategy that the parents use the discourse of language B while children interact with language A.

However, it can be seen from Omer's account that the grandparents employ a high-constraint strategy called the 'minimal gasp' in his interactions with the grandchildren. Omer explained it, this way:

Excerpt 3.4.

Oh, so sometimes... Sometimes my grandma does not let speak English. Yeah. So, she's... she made a rule now. So, that is the people who speak English. We're just not going to reply to them. Yeah. So, yes, we start speaking Turkish now because my grandma does not know to speak English, but my granddad knows that a little bit.

The minimal grasp strategy is a term to describe a specific approach that caregivers, particularly grandparents or older family members, may employ to encourage children to use the minority or home language when interacting with them. In this strategy, grandparents may pretend not to understand (or genuinely lack the skills to understand) the child when they speak a dominant language (e.g., English) and respond only in the minority language (e.g., Turkish). This encourages the child to switch to the home language to facilitate communication. By not responding in the dominant language, caregivers create an environment that reinforces the use of the home language, motivating children to engage and practice in the minority language, thus promoting its maintenance within the family.

The minimal grasp strategy is particularly effective in contexts where children are exposed to a dominant language outside the home, helping to ensure that they also develop proficiency in the family's heritage language (Lanza, 2007).

In this case, the use of Turkish by the grandmother becomes a pragmatic strategy, to communicate with her grandchildren. It is also an important factor to justify the 'Turkish-only' home language policy.

He also mentioned that his grandmother always says: "You should speak English in your mainstream school with people outside -such as your friends and teachers but speak Turkish at home and do so with your extended family here and Cyprus".

This statement from Omer's grandmother illustrates a clear separation of language use that reflects a family language policy deeply rooted in the context of bilingualism and cultural identity. The grandmother emphasises that English is appropriate for interactions in the mainstream school setting and with peers, highlighting its role as a vehicle for integration into the broader English-speaking community. This reflects an understanding of the social dynamics that children face, where proficiency in the dominant language is

crucial for successful communication and socialisation. By advocating for the use of Turkish at home and with extended family, the grandmother is reinforcing the importance of maintaining cultural heritage and linguistic ties within the family. This dual approach may enhance Omer's linguistic repertoire and cultural understanding, allowing him to engage meaningfully with both his familial and social contexts.

### **3.3.2. Omer's Agency in Language Use and Negotiation of the FLP**

Agency as 'the socio-culturally-mediated capacity to act' (Ahearn, 2001) can be constructed in the speakers' narratives during their presentations of their LPs. This process involves retelling, selecting, and self-presenting their lived experiences, particularly in interactions with researchers. In Omer's LP, I focus on the degree of activity and initiative he claims for himself and ascribes to others within his narrative.

Omer's narrative reveals a personal engagement with Turkish language that goes beyond passive participation in family-driven practices. For instance, he explains that his mother has taken him to Turkish complementary school since the age of two, saying, "Because my mom used to work there. Yeah. She started taking me there." This suggests that while Omer's initial exposure to the Turkish language was shaped by family decisions, particularly his mother's voluntary work and commitment to maintaining the home language, Omer's own actions also reflect his emerging agency. His description of how his mother and grandmother used to read him bedtime stories in Turkish underscores the familial and intergenerational efforts to sustain the language, linking his personal experience with broader family language maintenance strategies (King et al., 2008).

Omer's growing autonomy is evident in his evolving relationship with Turkish and his preference for music. This aligns with Fogle and King's (2013) findings that children in multilingual families often assert agency by aligning language practices with their own interests, which may diverge from parental expectations. While he acknowledges the family's emphasis on reading Turkish books, he expresses a shift in personal interests:

"I used to read in Turkish, but now I prefer hip-hop, rap music, and mashups that mix different languages."

This shift not only marks a change in his personal preferences but also illustrates how Omer actively uses his linguistic repertoire to match his evolving interests and life experiences.

Just as Emir uses music to create an embodied multilingual repertoire in Chapter 5, Omer's preference for music demonstrates how he navigates his linguistic landscape. In line with Busch's (2021) argument that language ideologies and practices are deeply intertwined with embodied experiences, Omer's preference for multilingual rap music illustrates his agentive stance. Instead of merely absorbing language through family-imposed policies (such as reading Turkish books), Omer uses his languages strategically to connect with the cultural and social aspects that resonate with him. By choosing music that blends languages like Turkish, English, and others, Omer transforms language practices to fit his interests, expanding his linguistic repertoire beyond what is traditionally expected within the family context. He actively reshapes his linguistic environment, drawing on languages that serve his personal, social, and emotional needs. This process of transformation reflects his capacity to match his languages with his interests, making language practices more relevant to his life, while still maintaining a connection to his cultural heritage through Turkish. His engagement with multilingual music becomes a tool not just for language use but for expressing and reinforcing his identity, enabling him to expand his linguistic repertoire in a way that aligns with his interests, cultural exposure, and social context.

Through this agentive stance, Omer demonstrates how language is not just a static resource but a dynamic tool that can be adapted and transformed based on personal agency and embodied experiences. His shift from family-driven language practices to self-directed, interest-driven multilingualism exemplifies the fluid and adaptive nature of language practices in the lives of bilingual children.

Children can enact their agency in various ways. During the LP task, when I offered Omer the flexibility to translanguage between his linguistic repertoire, he initially hesitated, despite the established "Turkish-only" policy set by his grandmother. Omer's perplexity when faced with the choice of language signals his awareness of this compliance regime and its significance within the household, as it establishes a linguistic boundary. In this moment, Omer enacted his agency by adhering to the rule until I explicitly permitted him to deviate from it. As Smith-Christmas (2020) points out, compliance regimes represent the structured language expectations imposed by the caregivers, such as parents or grandparents.

My statement, “he can use the language he preferred for the interview,” introduced non-compliant options (speaking English or mixing languages), causing Omer’s brief hesitation. Ultimately, he chose English over Turkish when given the choice, navigating between family expectations and the autonomy presented in the research context. This hesitation and his eventual preference for English raise an important question: “To what extent can a child’s use of a particular language be considered a choice if the child appears to lack the choice?” (Smith-Christmas, 2020, p. 225).

By selecting English during the interview, Omer demonstrated his agency in utilising his full linguistic repertoire, opting for the language that allowed him to express himself more freely in that setting. His choice reflects the interplay between family language policies, his social environment, and his personal preferences, illustrating how children draw on their multilingual resources based on situational demands.

Omer’s reference to his grandmother’s “Turkish-only” rule underscores his awareness of the intergenerational dynamics shaping family language policies. His hesitation before choosing English reveals his negotiation between compliance with this authority and exercising autonomy in language use.

### **3.3.3. Shaping Identity Through Language: The Role of Turkish in Omer’s Life**

In his visual description, Omer assigned the red colour, representing Turkish, to multiple locations on his body silhouette—the left hand, the heart, and near the mouth—while placing other languages in only one location each. Beyond the multiplicity of placements, the proportion of red dominates his body image, emphasising the centrality of Turkish in his linguistic repertoire. This visual representation aligns with his verbal accounts, which highlight the diverse channels through which he maintains and engages with Turkish, both online and offline. For instance, Omer spends two weeks every summer visiting his extended family in Cyprus and makes regular FaceTime calls with them.

#### Excerpt 3.5.

So, my mom sometimes rings my family. Um, it's, uh, FaceTime call. So, I stopped speaking to them in English because no one knows English in that country. So, I started speaking in Turkish. And then, my Mehmet *Dayı* (maternal uncle) starts joking around with me. He's just like, really funny. Yeah. It's like when we went there last year, we stayed at his house and he was keep calling me ‘*Gel buraya be eşek* and stuff’ (en. Come here you little donkey!).

Omer's strong emphasis on Turkish is reinforced by his reflections, particularly his interactions with family in Cyprus, where Turkish becomes the sole language of communication. His recount of switching from English to Turkish during FaceTime calls reflects his multilingualism while showcasing his awareness of the distinct cultural spaces where Turkish is necessary. These interactions also highlight his adaptability and agency in navigating his linguistic repertoire based on situational demands.

Omer's frequent communication with his extended family demonstrates a strong connection to the broader Turkish-Cypriot community. His regular visits and use of technology to maintain ties reflect ongoing efforts to sustain his home language. This practice reflects what Said (2021, p. 753) observed in her study, where technology enters the home primarily for the purpose of communication with loved ones to "create, maintain, and nurture relationships... almost mimicking the actual presence of those members within the family homes". For Omer, technology is not merely functional but a medium for preserving familial togetherness and reinforcing bonds through humour, affection, and shared traditions. His uncle's playful language— "Gel buraya be eşek" (Come here, you little donkey)—reflects intimacy and affection, underscoring the emotional and cultural dimensions of language maintenance. In this sense, Turkish represents more than linguistic proficiency; it embodies humour, familial connection, and cultural heritage.

Omer's narrative also reflects his negotiation between lived experiences and the broader ideas and desires associated with his languages. Busch (2012, p. 18) notes that "the linguistic repertoire points both backwards and forwards." It embodies the subject's past experiences while also surfacing future aspirations linked to language. Omer's desire to maintain and transmit Turkish is evident in his reflections:

Excerpt 3.6.

15 Interviewer Do you want to teach your children Turkish as well?

16 Omer Yeah, because if my family teach me Turkish, why don't I teach my kids Turkish. In our blood, it's just Turkish.

Omer's statement, "In our blood, it's just Turkish," reveals his essentialized view of language as an inherent aspect of identity, deeply rooted in family history and ethnic heritage. For him, language transmission is not merely about communication but about preserving a sense of self and continuity across generations. His belief that teaching Turkish to his future children is a natural extension of the practices he inherited from his family underscores the importance of intergenerational language transmission. This aligns with research on family language policies (FLP), which often link heritage language transmission to broader socio-cultural goals and identity preservation (Schwartz, 2010).

Omer's understanding of Turkish as both a familial and cultural asset also resonates with discourses shared by his grandparents, who emphasize ethnic identity through language. This perspective situates Omer's linguistic choices not just in the context of immediate interactions but within a broader biographical and historical framework. For him, maintaining and transmitting Turkish is an integral aspect of being Turkish.

Finally, the shared linguistic and cultural background between Omer and me as a researcher likely played a dual role. On the one hand, it facilitated rapport during the interview; on the other hand, it may have influenced Omer to foreground the importance of Turkish while downplaying the roles of other languages in his life. This dynamic highlights the nuanced interplay between researcher-participant relationships and the narratives participants choose to share.

### **3.4. Analysis of Remzi's LP**



**Figure 18.** Remzi's Language Portrait

Remzi is the second child of this family. He was in Year 4 and 8 years old when the interview was conducted. I followed the same procedure with Omer's LP about introducing the language portrait and asking Remzi's preferred language(s) during our interview. I conducted in language portrait with this child in the same day I did with Omer. Like his brother, Remzi preferred to continue in English even though he frequently translanguaged to Turkish. To illustrate his translanguaging and Cypriot-Turkish use, the excerpts are provided both in their original use and English translations.

Remzi started his LP with the head part of the body by colouring it light blue for English. Then, he moved to the left hand to colour this part with red for Turkish. This one is followed by the dark blue for French in the right hand, and green for Spanish on the right leg. Finally, he coloured the left leg with yellow for Mandarin. Remzi decided to label the yellow leg as China even though he used Mandarin for this part of the body in his verbal

narrative. Lastly, he began to colour a large part of the heart (or chest) with red and a slightly small part blue; however, he erased them and re-coloured this part with all languages except Mandarin.

The same choice in colouring the languages according to the national flags was observed in both of the children's portraits. As seen in the excerpt below, Remzi justifies the choice of colours in his language portrait with his association to the colours in the national flags. This pattern, making a direct connection between nations and languages (Melo-Pfeifer, 2015).

Excerpt 3.7.

- |    |             |  |
|----|-------------|--|
| 17 | Remzi       | Mandarin nasıldı? <b>Orange</b> gibi bir <b>colour</b> dır değil mi?<br>(How was Mandarin [language]? It's a colour like orange, right?) |
| 18 | Interviewer | Do you mean the flag?  |
| 19 | Remzi       | Yeah.  |
| 20 | Interviewer | It's yellow and red, I guess.  |

As in his brother's LP, Remzi structured the body image from the top to the bottom which may indicate that he ordered the languages that he recently engages in daily life more to the ones that he engages less. As Busch (2018b, p. 10) indicated that "the body may refer to common metaphors such as the head as the place of reason, the belly as the place of emotions, the heart as the location of intimacy and the hand as the site of social activity". In the excerpt below, the child explains why he coloured the head with English. It is because he 'thinks' English. In fact, it shows a link between language proficiency and language placement in the body: the higher a language is placed in the body, the higher the child shows proficiency in the language.

During our interview, he also mentioned that one of his best friends in his mainstream school is French and they sometimes practice in French together.

Excerpt 3.8.

- |    |       |   |
|----|-------|---|
| 21 | Remzi | I speak French with Alex. He is one of my best friends and speaks French very well. |
|----|-------|---|

22	Remzi	Do you speak other languages?
23	Interviewer	Well, I've learnt some [words in] French and Spanish from my friends
24	Remzi	Do you know how to say your name in French?
25	Interviewer	Yeah, it's <i>Je m'appelle Busra</i> . Am I correct? (my name is )
26	Remzi	Did you know that for N ((he draws the capital letter 'N' in the air with his hand)), they use 'n' ((he draws lower case 'n'))).
27	Interviewer	No, I didn't.

Remzi's account reveals his metalinguistic awareness of French. His metalinguistic comments about French can also be interpreted that he forms his linguistic repertoire not only with English and Turkish, but also with French. Changes in his linguistic repertoire can be understood as liberating since they open new communicative worlds (Purkarthofer, 2020). These comments further shows that the child has a positive attitude towards other languages which contributes to his experience of multilingualism.

### **3.4.1. Configuration of Remzi's Language Portrait**

This section examines the dynamics of Remzi's linguistic repertoire within the context of his family's language policies and the broader sociocultural environment. Both Remzi and his brother, Omer, acknowledge a household rule established by their grandparents: "Speak Turkish at home." Remzi's reflections on this rule reveal a complex interplay between compliance and personal preference, illustrating how family language policies shape his linguistic choices. Despite his acceptance of the Turkish-only rule, Remzi's responses indicate a pragmatic approach to language use, influenced by his experiences growing up in a diverse and multicultural setting. This exploration highlights the nuances of language transmission across generations and the varying motivations behind language maintenance, providing insight into Remzi's bilingual identity and the challenges he faces in navigating two languages.

Excerpt 3.9.

Cypriot Turkish is in *italic*.

- 28 Interviewer Your brother said that there is a rule about speaking Turkish at home. Can you tell me a little bit about it?
- 29 Remzi Yeah, anneannem “İngiliz okulunda İngilizce, evde Türkçe *gonuşun*” der.  
(my grandmother says: “Speak English at your British school but speak Turkish when you are at home”)
- 30 Remzi Ondan dolayı biraz Türkçe biraz İngilizce *gonuşurum*.  
(That’s why sometimes I speak English and sometimes Turkish.)
- 31 Interviewer How do you feel about this rule? Is it something that you enjoy or is it like an obligation to you?
- 32 Remzi Yeah.
- 33 Interviewer So, how do you feel about it?
- 34 Remzi Well... [sighing]. Ermm...It’s OKAY (with a wavering voice indicating his reluctance). Yeah, it’s okay.

Remzi does not seem particularly motivated by ‘Speak Turkish’ rule. Nevertheless, he seems to accept his grandmother’s Turkish-only rule as a necessary evil. This shows that the child is in compliance with the caregivers about the language-of-interaction even though he is not enthusiastic about it. A possible explanation to his compliance might be that the caregivers, particularly the grandparents, have strongly established the parameters for the compliance by requiring Turkish-only interaction each and every time that they interact with their grandchildren (as it’s evident in my observations of family interactions

and Omer's account). There are, however, other possible explanations such as sibling factor: that is the first child (Omer) did not reject the rule of language-of-interaction at home, and this became more acceptable for the second child (Remzi). Further, talking about the transmission of home language to the next generations, Remzi said:

Excerpt 3.10.

35 Interviewer And do you think that when you have children, you will teach them Turkish?

36 Remzi Hmm. **Evet, ama yani** I think they won't listen.  
(Yeah, but I mean)

Remzi's account on the transmission of home language indicates that this transmission is mostly dependent on children rather than the parents. In contrast to Remzi's view, however, the grandparents believe that the maintenance of home language can be achieved by the parents' effort. The excerpt below illustrates their view on this:

Excerpt 3. 11:

Then, we talked about what kind of strategies they used in terms of maintaining Turkish with their children and grandchildren. Both the grandmother and grandfather believed that children would forget home language quickly if there is no discipline and certain rules about it. Therefore, they commented that the continuity of home language depends heavily on the parents rather than the children." (Field notes from 2nd home visit, 24/11/2019)

It should be noted that the grandparents in this family are the first-generation migrants who moved to the UK about 50 years ago. As stated in the section 4.1.1, the grandmother said that she considers she had to choose Turkish over English as the home language when they raised their children since Turkish language is also part of their Turkish identity and the continuity of this identity is highly related to the language. Therefore, their motivation was to preserve what they brought from their mother land as the culture, language and identity. This motivation is not echoed in Remzi's account since his lived experiences in Turkish language and his communicative needs are different than his grandparents. He was born and raised in one of the most diverse, multicultural cities around the world. His linguistic repertoire and his beliefs about language use would naturally be reflecting this more diverse environment.

Following this, I asked Remzi about his preference about the language of interaction at home.

Excerpt 3.12

37	Interviewer	How was it with you? You seem to follow Speak Turkish rule at home. What would be your decision if you were given a chance?
38	Remzi	English.
39	Interviewer	Why?
40	Remzi	Because it's the most simplest one for me.
41	Interviewer	What do you mean by the simplest? Can you tell me a bit more?
42	Remzi	Well. For example, you don't say evil smile and stuff in Turkish.

Similar to previous studies, regardless of the children's levels of positive attitudes towards the home language, most children prefer to speak the majority language (the language of the country they live) as it's 'easier' for them (Wilson, 2020). Therefore, it is not unpredictable that Remzi prefers English when he communicates with his siblings, cousins, friends and parents wherever it is possible. It is likely that his preference of speaking English is not associated with the emotions towards the language, it is rather based on a pragmatic choice of speaking with 'simplest' language.

When Remzi states that English is "the simplest one," in line 40, he may be referring to the structure and expressions used in the language. His example of "evil smile" suggests that he perceives certain phrases or idiomatic expressions as more direct or easily understood in English compared to Turkish. The use of the term "simplest" might also reflect a cognitive perspective, where Remzi feels that English requires less effort for him to express thoughts and emotions, especially when interacting with his peers or in contexts where Turkish might feel less natural.

The complexity of navigating two languages reflects the challenges and advantages of bilingualism, as Remzi balances his adherence to family language policies with his own linguistic inclinations and cultural influences. Ultimately, this interaction reveals insights

into how language preferences are shaped by personal experiences, social contexts, and cultural nuances, providing a deeper understanding of Remzi’s multilingual identity.

In the excerpt below, Remzi reflects various aspects of language use, bilingualism, and the dynamics of language learning. Remzi displays a blend of Turkish and English in his responses, indicating his comfort in navigating both languages. His initial response to the question about writing in Turkish involves a switch back to Turkish (“Yani Türk okulunda mı?”) to clarify the context. The transition between Turkish and English highlights Remzi’s bilingual identity and his ability to switch codes as needed to express himself more clearly. Remzi’s hesitance and search for the right term (e.g., “yüz şey” or “a hundred... Oh, what was the name of this thing?”) illustrate common challenges bilingual children face when recalling specific vocabulary in a language that may not be their dominant one. The interviewer’s prompt to use English if he cannot remember the Turkish word indicates a supportive approach, fostering a safe space for language expression without pressure. Remzi mentions that writing occurs at school and suggests limited writing in Turkish at home, highlighting the situational use of language.

Excerpt 3.13:

43	Interviewer	So, do you write in Turkish sometimes?
44	Remzi	<b>Yani Türk okulunda mı?</b> (Do you mean at Turkish [complementary] school?)
45	Interviewer	<b>Evet, ya da evde mesela.</b> (Yes, and also at home.)
46	Remzi	<b>Sadece yazarık ama öğretmen yani, dün biz şey, yani yüz şey, adı ne ya.</b> (Yeah. We write sometimes. But the teacher ... ermm... I mean, we did ... hmm... a hundred... Oh, what was the name of this thing?)
47	Interviewer	Say it in English if you couldn’t remember.
48	Remzi	<b>Şey,</b> we would count at up to a hundred. Yeah, we only do count like, (Well)
49	Remzi	you know like how to say “ <b>Günaydin and güle güle</b> ” and stuff.

(Good morning, goodbye)

50 Interviewer Hmm, like the greetings.

51 Remzi Yeah.

### 3.4.2. Generational Language Negotiation: Sibling Agency and Grandmother's Role in Bilingual Communication

As illustrated in the excerpt above, Remzi uses translanguaging, drawing from his linguistic repertoire and mixing languages according to his communicative needs. In another example while I was present in their homes, Omer, Remzi, and their grandmother engage in a humorous exchange, illustrating the dynamics of sibling rivalry and negotiation. Remzi was in an argument about his collection of the footballer stickers with his brother. It was because Omer wanted to borrow some of his stickers. Their grandmother was present at the room with us.

#### Excerpt 3.14:

52 Omer I'll let you to have the next one this time. Promise. Come on. ((trying to catch the sticker collection from Remzi's hand))

53 Remzi I said no! ((laughing)).  
((he is deceiving his brother as if he would give the stickers to him.))  
Yeah, you'll keep dreaming about it. ((laughing))

54 Grandmother **Nedir?**  
(What is that about?)

55 Remzi Anneanne ya, **sticker**'larımı ister. Bu sefer vermem. Bilirsin geçen gün napti?  
(Yeah. He is asking for my stickers, grandma. It's not going to happen this time. Oh, did you know what he did the other day?)

56 Grandmother Nedir o? ((pointing at the stickers in Remzi's hand))

57 Remzi **Stic...** Hmm.. Hani vardı ya yapışan şey.  
(Well, You know the thing, the thing that sticks.)

The dialogue between Omer and Remzi in line 52 and 53 is conducted entirely in English, which underscores that the siblings use English as code-of-interaction. While their grandparents enforce a Turkish-only rule at home, the dynamics of sibling interaction often led to a preference for English, the majority language in their everyday lives. This preference illustrates how language use can shift in different contexts, even when specific language policies are in place.

The grandmother's interjection in Turkish, "Nedir?" (What is that about?) in line 54, serves as a crucial moment in the conversation. By using Turkish, the grandmother reinforces the family's expectation for Turkish to be the language of interaction, especially in the context of adult involvement. Her question signals a desire to engage with her grandchildren in their heritage language, demonstrating her commitment to maintaining Turkish within the family dynamics. The grandmother's entry into the conversation also introduces a moment of linguistic authority, as she shifts the interaction back towards the home language.

By switching to Turkish after his grandmother's prompt in line 55, Remzi complies with the established home language policy, which emphasises the importance of speaking Turkish in familial interactions. This action not only adheres to the expectations set by his caregivers but also illustrates that home language policy is negotiated over different times and spaces. Remzi consciously chooses to align his language with that of his grandmother, thereby affirming the family's linguistic norms.

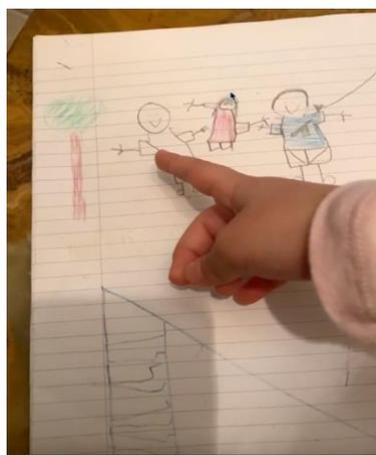
The grandmother's repeated question, "Nedir o?" (What is that?) in line 56, serves as a prompt for Remzi to articulate the word "sticker" in Turkish rather than relying on the English term. This challenge encourages Remzi to utilise his full linguistic repertoire and reinforces the expectation that Turkish should be the primary language of interaction within the family. This moment highlights the intergenerational dynamics in language use, where the grandmother, as a first-generation migrant, emphasises the importance of maintaining the home language. Remzi's response, "Stic... Hmm.. Hani vardı ya yapışan şey" (Well, you know the thing, the thing that sticks), reflects a struggle to find the correct Turkish term. His use of "yapışan şey" (the thing that sticks) illustrates his effort to communicate effectively while adhering to his grandmother's request. This negotiation

of language reflects the broader experiences of multilingual children as they navigate different linguistic environments and expectations.

Omer and Remzi exercise their agency within a framework established by their grandmother, who employs parental strategies to reinforce the home language policy. The interplay of compliance, linguistic norms, linguistic repertoire, and generational positioning creates a rich context for understanding how children navigate their identities while maintaining cultural ties within the family. The grandmother's role in this interaction underscores the importance of intergenerational relationships in shaping language use and agency in multilingual contexts.

### **3.5. Data Analyses of Scrapbooks**

Scrapbooks in this study have been employed to record children's verbal and visual self-representation about their languages and identities. All children participants in Omer's Family made their own productions and talked about how and why they created this particular production. I encouraged them to share their beliefs, choices, and practices about their languages. This recording is collected remotely through a video call due to the coronavirus pandemic. In a single recording (app. 80 min), I talked with Omer, Remzi, Sevgi and their mother Selen.



**Figure 19.** Sevgi at playground with her brothers.

Sevgi is 5 years old and the youngest member of Omer's Family. She was registered Year 1 in mainstream school by the time when I entered to the fieldwork in 2019. Since their mother Selen is a key worker, her children keep attending their schools from the beginning of the pandemic.

I informed the children about the scrapbook project via a short video explaining that they can draw pictures, make texts, create stories and add anything related to their language(s) and cultures. During our regular calls, I checked with their mother if the children continued with their text-production to talk about. When Selen and I set a date for this interview, it was just before the Christmas holiday.

Before starting Sevgi's interview, I told her that she can speak in any language she wants to and that she can mix the languages. In Image 1, Sevgi started to explain why she wanted to draw this picture.

Excerpt 3.15:

58 Sevgi I made this one for you because I love spending time with my brothers at the playground. Here, this is me with the pink dress.

59 Interviewer Great. Can you introduce me what you drew for me?

60 Sevgi Yeah. Thi...

61 Selen You know, you can speak in Turkish if you like.

62 Sevgi **Hmm. Bak abla, bu ağaç. Bunu çizdim. Hmm. Sonra, şu Nike tişörtlü Omer, öbürü de Remzi abim.**

(Look abla, this is a tree. I drew this. Hmm. This one over there with Nike t-short on him is Omer abim and the other one is Remzi abim. ((abi: big brother, abla: big sister))

63 Interviewer Çok güzel. Remzi'de tişört yok mu?  
(Great, Isn't there a t short for Remzi?)

64 Sevgi Yeah, because Omer loves this one.

65 Interviewer Hmm, like the greetings.

66 Omer Yeah, **o benim dans tişörtüm.** ((He does street dance with rap music)).  
(This is my dance top)

67 Sevgi And, bu... Bu **slide**'dir.

(This is.... This is a slide.)		
68	Selen	Ama biz buna ne derdik? (But what would we call that?)
69	Sevgi	Hmm. ((silence)). Mommy, I don't know that in Turkish.
70	Selen	Hadi biliyorsun, hatırla. (Come on, you know it. Just remember)
71	Sevgi	((silence))
72	Selen	Kay-dı-rak. Hadi söyle. ((spelling)) (Slide. Come on say it.)
73	Sevgi	Erm. What is that again?
74	Selen	Kaydırak. <b>You know it</b> kızım.
75	Sevgi	Oh, it is hard.
76	Interviewer	What do you mean?
77	Sevgi	It is so hard.
78	Selen	Hard to pronounce?
79	Sevgi	Yeah, it is hard to pronounce. It is hard to pronounce ... ((she repeats several times as if this is a song)).
80	Sevgi	Okay, <b>kaydırak</b> .

Sevgi's verbal representation provides data about how she navigates her linguistic repertoire, drawing on both English and Turkish. She started talking about her drawing in English, but shortly after, her mother encouraged her to use Turkish. Unable to find the

right word in Turkish, she seamlessly shifted back to English, illustrating how she dynamically uses her full linguistic resources to communicate. In my second visit to Fam3's house, the mother mentioned about how they overcome these kind of moments (that is if Sevgi does not know the word in Turkish). Confirming the mother's account (see Excerpt 3.18 under the section 3.5), Sevgi asks for the word in Turkish by saying "Can you tell me the word? I don't know that in Turkish". In the excerpt above, we can see that she expresses herself exactly in the way that her mother told earlier. Even though she finds the word 'kaydırak' difficult to pronounce, her effort participating to learn the word rather than resisting it is important in terms of enacting her agency. However, Sevgi's situation highlights a key challenge in understanding child agency: That is, "child agency specifically in so far as the child is still in the process of acquiring the sociocultural knowledge (including language) requisite for their capacity to act" (Smith-Christmas, 2020, p. 218). As a 5-year-old whose home language differs from the majority language, Sevgi is navigating a complex linguistic environment. Her agentive acts, therefore, should be carefully contextualised within her developmental stage, as she balances the demands of acquiring the majority language with maintaining her home language. This underscores the need to view her agency not as fixed or fully autonomous but as emerging and shaped by her sociocultural context, where her linguistic resources and interactions play a significant role.



**Figure 20. Names of the baby dolls.**

Regarding the different identities, Sevgi's explanation of her baby dolls' names provides an insightful data source. As seen in the Figure 19, she introduced her favourite baby dolls to me as part of her scrapbook production.

Excerpt 3.16:

81	Interviewer	What is her name?
82	Sevgi	Hmm.
83	Remzi	Ben bilirim. Zaten ya Ayse'dir, ya da Fatma. Bütün bebekleri aynı isimde. (I know. It's either Ayse or Fatma. She gives these two names to all her baby dolls.)
84	Sevgi	Yeah. Adı Ayse'dir. (Yeah, her name is Ayse.)
85	Sevgi	I call this one Futma. ((pointing the picture II))

86	Interviewer	Futma?
87	Sevgi	Yeah, because she is Indian.
88	Interviewer	Oh, I see. Instead of your favourite name Fatma, you give her Indian version of this name. (She nods). Do you think Futma speaks any other language than English?
89	Sevgi	Himm, I think she knows Indian, too.
90	Sevgi	And she is Elsa.
91	Interviewer	Yes, I know her from the movie Frozen.
92	Sevgi	This little baby here. Her name is .... Ermmm... Müzel.
93	Interviewer	Müzel? What is that?
94	Sevgi	Yeah Müzel. You know.
95	Interviewer	Oh, do you mean <b>Güzel</b> ?
96	Selen	<b>Güzel denir kızım ona. G ile Güzel.</b> (It's called Güzel. With G, Güzel) ((güzel: beautiful))
97	Sevgi	Yeah, her name is <b>Güzel</b> .

In the excerpts above, the child's explanation of name-matching considering the nation that baby doll belongs illustrates that she individually negotiates the different identities corresponds to the ascribed national identity of each doll. Having this Futma (even if it's a made-up name which sounds closer to Fatima) unpacks her views on how she embedded and embodied the identities through her dolls. Furthermore, she seems to understand my intention about Futma's multicultural and multilingual identities and answers my question as Futma would speak Indian as well as English. Lastly, Sevgi acknowledges that

languages are related to identities as language choices and our names could be a reflection of our multilingual identities.

To encourage and maintain certain languages within the family depends mainly on the beliefs and goals that family members ascribe to those languages. There are many internal and external factors that influence these beliefs and goals within a family. One of the most crucial factors in the maintenance of home language is parental impact beliefs (De Houwer, 1999) which are motivated by parents' migration histories, past language and educational experiences, cultural upbringing and knowledge of raising bilingual children (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020). Under this section, I aim to show the caregivers' involvement and investment in the process of language learning and development as well as identity construction of their children in this family. Using the data from parental interviews, participant observations and field notes, I address the following questions: (a) In what ways do parental language ideologies affect FLP practices at home and (b) how do parents and grandparents negotiate languages and identities in interaction with their children in intergenerational TS families in England?

### **3.6. Parental beliefs and strategies towards home language learning**

Selen and Mehmet are both working parents. So that, the grandparents have been taking care of the grandchildren while the parents are at the workplace. Selen views this as an opportunity for her children to use Turkish more often in their daily communication. It is because the grandparents set out the 'speak-only-Turkish' rule for the family members as it has also appeared in Omer's LP (language portrait) data. Both the grandmother and grandfather believe that children would forget the home language quickly if there is no discipline and certain rules about communicating in it. Therefore, they claim that the continuity of home language depends heavily on the parents rather than the children. To this end, the grandmother continues: "It, in fact, depends mainly on the mothers". Then, the grandmother explains further how she and her husband achieved to maintain the home language with her children:

#### Excerpt 3.17:

I witnessed that some mothers in our community try to speak English with their children just because they want to learn English. Why should I make my child forget Turkish so that I can improve my English myself? If this happens, the child's Turkish skills will be completely lost. I mean, I didn't prefer my English language

learning over my children's Turkish. My husband had to work long hours outside. I was also contributing to the family income working as a seamstress at home. Even though we were working hard, I supported my children to get [institutional] education in both English and Turkish. I read to them stories, spoke to them Turkish... I do the same thing for my grandchildren now" (Interview with parents and grandparents, 03/12/2019)

It can be seen in her narrative that the grandmother believes she made a sacrifice for supporting her children's home language development. The grandmother's account illustrates that she highly values the home language and has a strong motivation for the maintenance of this language for the next generations. Her daughter's views on language maintenance are affected by her attitude. Selen evaluates herself as a balanced bilingual who speaks both English and Turkish at a proficient level and aims to raise her children as bilinguals. However, she realises that the children always try to speak English with her since they are very well aware that she can speak English, too. Selen explains how she overcomes this situation:

Excerpt 3.18:

Selen: I have many friends whose children are almost the same age as my children. Sometimes, for example, I speak Turkish to those children, but sadly they don't understand. Oh, thank God, my children can understand most of the things in Turkish. Since I was born and raised here, I can sometimes speak to them in English automatically. But, I immediately notice this, I turn it into Turkish after a few lines. For example, nowadays my little daughter has started to speak more English since she started to go to a British school. Her brothers also have an influence on this, for sure. I say, 'I don't understand you!' until she switches to Turkish. Then, she realises that she needs to either switch to Turkish or she will not speak at all.

Grandmother Sevgi: Or she says: 'you tell me, I don't know how to say this in Turkish'.

Selen: Oh yes, she says after that, for example 'I don't know that in Turkish' or something. Then I say, 'Tell me what do you want?' She says it in English, and I say that word in Turkish. So that, I ask her to repeat this Turkish word with me over and over again. She improves her Turkish like that."

This extract demonstrates that Selen appears to acknowledge their success in transmitting the home language from her own generation to the next one after witnessing some of the examples of struggle in her social circle. Selen also appreciates that her children have positive attitudes toward the parental choices of home language development. During the interview, she pointed out that the children are mostly cooperating with them on the continuity of the home language.

As pointed out in this excerpt, the parents and the grandparents use one of the parental discourse strategies named 'minimal grasp' (Lanza (1992, 1997) and the child does not oppose this strategy. In this strategy, parents pretend that they do not understand when the child produces an utterance in the language dispreferred by the parent. However, Selen highlighted the fact that the grandparents' and their own strategies as parents towards their children's language use are different since their relationship with the languages are different. In parallel with Omer's account in his LP data, Selen stated that Mehmet and herself do not follow a strict 'Turkish-only' rule, they sometimes simply reply to the children in Turkish if they speak in English (move-on strategy). As stated in the excerpt above, she sometimes 'automatically' responds to the children in English since her bilingualism has an impact on her interactions with the children.

### **3.6.1. Identity constructions across generations within the family**

The individual's perception of self as a member of the family is an important factor related to the negotiation of identities within the family. In the minority language education context, this perception has a close relationship with the home language. The home language contains a symbolic representation of the heritage and roots of the immigrant families since it is the most important cultural and ethnic feature (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020). However, there are other factors affecting the individual's identity negotiations depending on their migration trajectories, personal life stories and professions and relations with the other communities. Therefore, identity can be experienced differently from one member of the family to the other as well as from one generation to the next. In the interview data, it is revealed that the family members construct identities at multiscalar levels according to their relationships within and

outside of the family and across the generations. In the following episode from the fieldnotes, the grandmother talks about how she perceived the Turkish identity:

Excerpt 3.19:

According to the grandmother's account in Omer's Family, transmitting home language to the next generations also helps the family preventing the ethnic identity loss. She said: "Why should we forget our Turkishness because we came to England?". And continued by putting her hand onto her heart "It's in and with us.". Then, she pointed to the granddaughter who was sitting at her foot: "For example, I taught her to pray before eating. She says 'Praise the Lord! Feed those who have no food, too'<sup>11</sup> by imitating this little girl's way of speech. Seeing her grandmother was imitating her, Sevgi became shy again and nodded in agreement. After that, the grandmother continued to exemplify one of the Turkish 'national' values which are highly important to her:

The grandmother turned to her little granddaughter again and asked: "Who is the most important person?". Her granddaughter replied vivaciously: "Ataturk!". "Well done my daughter!", the grandmother beamed. (*Fieldnotes from 2nd visit, 03/12/2019*)

In this excerpt, the grandmother's narrative indicates a strong relationship between her ethnonational identity and language use. She imbues her Turkishness with symbolic values (with ethnic and religious/cultural values) that she thinks highly related to her ethno-national identity. This 'question-with-fixed-answer' seems to be a performance between the grandmother and granddaughter which motivates the child to overtly express ethnic identity affiliation. The symbolic power of Turkishness in grandmother's language ideology has resulted in a monolingual identity construction for her.

Apart from the grandparent's effort, Selen points out that complementary school education has an impact on the children's awareness of their ethnic identity. She started complementary school as a student at the age of 5, then worked as a traditional dance teacher for four years when Omer entered this school. In addition, she is currently working as a volunteer in the school canteen. Hence, complementary school is not only an institutional site for language and culture transmission to the next generation, but also an important space of socialisation for the families (Lytra, 2012). Selen stated that they

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<sup>11</sup> This grace which consisted of these two sentences is common practice for Turkish Muslims before starting the meal.

attend and enjoy the national day celebrations at this school as a whole family. After my question of ‘Was there any national day celebrations from the history of Cypriot Turks?’, she explains her view:

Excerpt 3.20:

“Well... There are a few celebrations specific to Turkish Cypriots like 15 November (Independence Day of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus), but they are not as effective as the celebrations related to Ataturk or Republic Day of Turkey. Although we are Cypriot Turkish, we talk more about Ataturk than Rauf Denktas or Dr Fazil Kucuk.”

Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p. 598) pointed out that “identities are intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping, complementary relations, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice, and authority/delegitimacy”. As Selen points out, the symbolic value of mainland Turkey celebrations and public figures appears to be more prestigious even in this complementary school which is run by members of the Cypriot Turkish community with a large number of attendees of Cypriot Turkish backgrounds. Ataturk’s authority as an iconic representation of ‘national’ values delegitimizes the other Turkish-Cypriot public figures such as Rauf Denktas and renders them invisible. This is a process that (Irvine & Gal, 2000) have called *erasure* in the context of language ideologies; however, the term may also help to explain the process of valuation explained in Selen's narrative.

Similarly, the grandmother was also challenged about the “Turkishness” her Cypriot Turkish identity when she was in Turkey:

The grandmother mentioned a coach trip she attended with a group of Cypriot Turks to the eastern part of Turkey last summer. While they were heading off to a tourist attraction, the coach was stopped for a regular security check (it’s the procedure that the policeman checks the passenger’s ID if there is an outlaw travelling). After finishing his control, the policeman told the passengers: “They are all Cypriots. No Turkish here?” and everyone on the bus shouted at him "We are Turkish!". Even though she understood that the aim of the policeman was not discriminate against them but implied that 'they are Turkish Cypriots', she found the policeman's utterances rather hurtful and unpleasant. (*Fieldnotes from 2nd visit, 03/12/2019*).

The grandmother's account reveals how her “Turkishness” in another socio-political environment is contested. This ‘othering’ process illustrates that what sort of language users count as ‘legitimate’ members of that given community is not to be taken for granted but renegotiated in particular discursive environments.

Besides the conflict between negotiating Cypriot Turkish/mainland Turkish identities, there are further examples showing that Omer’s Family has gained more multicultural identities over time, from one generation to the other. Selen describes the then-and-now cultural practices in their family:

Excerpt 3.21:

“When I was a child, we wouldn’t celebrate New Year or have a Christmas tree because my parents were not willing to do so. However, these are playing important roles in our life now with my children. We try to engage with the British culture as well as the Turkish one”.

Selen’s views on providing a more multicultural environment for her children is related to her own childhood experiences. She developed positive attitudes towards the involvement in the mainstream culture since her engaging with the mainstream society was limited to some degree (e.g., she would not join Halloween, New Year etc. celebrations) as a child. This shows that Selen constructs for herself a more flexible multilingual/multicultural identity as a 2nd generation, Cypriot Turk.

Lastly, the parental interview revealed that there are further identity negotiations between the oldest child, Omer and his parents. Selen explains that:

Excerpt 3.25:

“Omer admires the culture of the Black community. He went to the market with this father the other day and came back home with a very ugly necklace with Fortnite brand on it, which he insisted on buying. -She laughs- I believe, his admiration derived from the fact that we are living in a Black community-dominated neighbourhood. Thus, we let him enrol in a street dance club since he wanted it so badly. He is very keen on hip-hop music and the street dance.”

While telling this story about Omer's interest in the Black community, Selen seemed to reveal ambivalent feelings towards her son's cultural preferences. Yet, she supported her child's involvement with a different community's culture.

Overall, the negotiations of language ideologies and identities in Omer's Family vary intergenerationally. This section has illustrated that fixed and more fluid identity positionings are negotiated across generations in this family.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter explored the linguistic practices within Omer's Family through LP and interactional data, parental interviews, and ethnographic observations, shedding light on the negotiation of linguistic repertoires in this multilingual, intergenerational family. The LP data revealed a strong connection between Omer's and Remzi's perceived language use, illustrating how the children's emotional and functional associations with language influenced their language practices. Omer's choices reflect the complex ways in which children shape their linguistic repertoires, negotiating between heritage and societal languages as part of their identity formation.

The parental interviews highlighted the family's ongoing efforts to maintain their home language, even as the children's preferences shifted once they began socialising outside the home. Omer's parents expressed a clear desire to preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage, yet his shift toward the dominant language and popular culture in certain social contexts emphasised his growing agency in navigating his multilingual environment. This dynamic illustrates how children influence and reshape family language policies through their everyday language practices and interactions.

Overall, Omer's Family exemplifies the intricate processes of language negotiation, where children's language ideologies and management efforts play a significant role in either transforming, maintaining, or adapting family language practices. The interplay between children's agency and caregivers' language policies reveals the challenges of sustaining multilingualism and cultural preservation, particularly within the context of migration.



# **Chapter 8 Data Analysis of Asmin's Family**

## **Asmin's Family**

### **Introduction**

This chapter introduces Asmin's Family in this study and provides the detailed account of negotiated and constructed language policies of this family through the recorded interactional data, interviews with children and parents, and my fieldnotes.

The chapter starts with introducing the three generations of this large family and each member's relation to the child participants who are Asmin (10 years old) and Beyza (5 years old). Having the child participants in the centre of the analyses, it is followed by the examination of Asmin's (main child participant) language portrait to explore how this child evaluates her own communicative resources and positions herself with regard to familial language ideologies and practices.

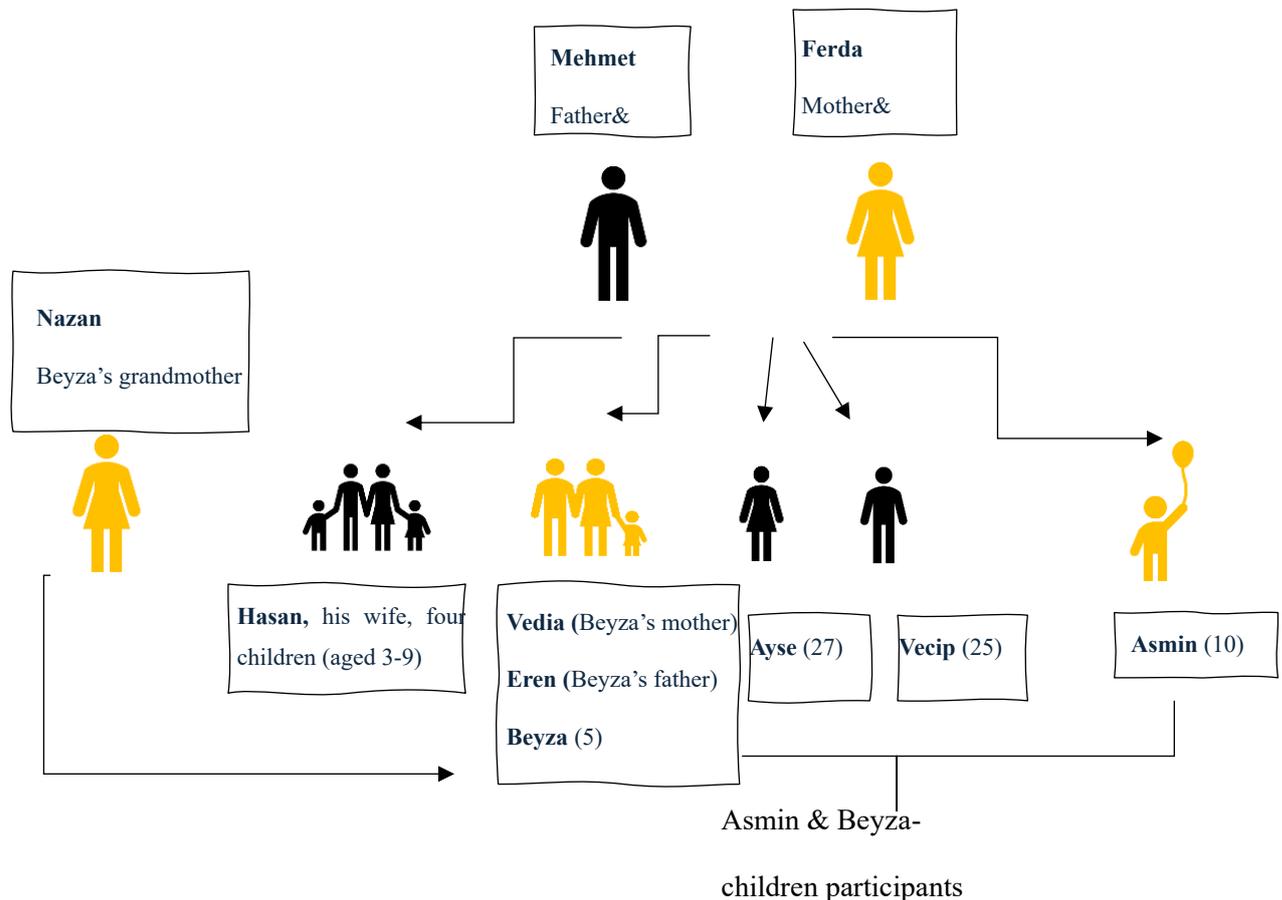
The chapter further details Asmin's role in influencing the language practices in the home as well as her family's role in shaping Asmin's language ideologies and practices. Drawing on the data from the children's interviews (LP and scrapbook), parental interviews, observations, recordings and the fieldnotes, this chapter aims to illustrate the dynamic and interconnected aspects of family language policy within this intergenerational Cypriot-Turkish family, approached from a child-centered perspective. In the section that follows, I provide a concise introduction to Asmin's Family, outlining their socio-cultural backgrounds.

### **4.1. An intergenerational Cypriot-Turkish family**

As the youngest child of this family, Asmin was born and raised in Hackney, where one of the sizeable Turkish and Kurdish communities resides. Within her large family (see Figure 1), Asmin shares a tri-level detached house with her parents, and her older sister and brother. Asmin's other siblings are both married to Cypriot Turks (who were also British-borns). Notably, her niece, Beyza, is a presence within Asmin's household, as she is cared for by her grandparents collectively during weekdays.

Asmin's parents, Ferda and Mehmet, migrated from Northern Cyprus almost 35 years ago, right after their marriage. Mehmet's work at the logistics department of a Turkish

retail market required extensive travel, leading him to be away from home for weeks on end, spanning over several years while Ferda was taking care of children at home. At the time when I collected the data (started in October 2019) all children of Ferda's, except Asmin, were working professionals.



**Figure 21.** Asmin's Family tree.

All families participating in this study can be considered large families, consisting of more than one child and including grandparents. However, Asmin's Family is the largest of them all. To better understand the role this large family plays in shaping Asmin's (10) and Beyza's (5) language ideology and practices, I outline the family dynamics in detail.

The core members of the family living in the household include Asmin, her parents, and her two siblings. However, there is a long-standing tradition that regularly brings other family members together. Every Sunday, Asmin's eldest brother, along with his four

children aged between 3 and 9, and Asmin's other sister (Beyza's mother) with her nuclear family, gather at this family residence. Additionally, Nazan, Beyza's paternal grandmother, is a frequent visitor, further enriching the family's living space. Nazan shares the responsibility of caring for Beyza with Ferda, Asmin's mother. Since Beyza was born five years ago, Nazan and Ferda have been seeing each other more frequently. Given that Beyza's parents both work full-time, Beyza spends about half of her day with her grandmothers, and sometimes she even stays overnight at one of their homes. In Asmin's room, there is a bed and a small wardrobe containing Beyza's clothes and toys, reserved for when she stays overnight. Therefore, this should take into account when Asmin refers to her 'family' home which does not only imply the place where her parents and two siblings reside but also considers the regular visits and presence of her extended family members (see Section 3.1.4 for further discussion on conceptualising family within Family Language Policy).

This intricate family network includes Nazan, an extended family member whose presence significantly influences the language ideologies and practices within this family. Nazan is not only Beyza's grandmother but has also been a close friend of Ferda's for nearly two decades. Born in Northern Cyprus, Nazan married a Cypriot Turkish man and migrated to London approximately 40 years ago. She is the principal of a Turkish complementary school, North London Turkish School (NLTS), and is actively involved in promoting the Cypriot-Turkish language, culture, and identity among parents. As one of Ferda's closest friends, she also encourages Ferda to participate actively in the events organised by the Turkish-speaking communities in London.

Asmin's family resides in one of the most diverse areas in London, Hackney, where Turkish-speaking communities are prominently present. This diversity provides a rich linguistic environment that shapes the family's language practices and contributes to the formation of their linguistic repertoire. Every member of Asmin's family has been raised in an environment where they have been consistently exposed to varieties of Turkish (Londoner, Cypriot, Standard Turkish) and English through interactions with parents and grandparents. These interactions have led to the adoption of the Cypriot Turkish vernacular, as the parents primarily communicate in this variety, a practice I have observed firsthand.

Simultaneously, exposure to Standard Turkish through Turkish TV channels, radio programs, and complementary school education—where Standard Turkish is the language of instruction—highlights the role of institutional and media influences in their linguistic repertoire. Cypriot Turkish and Standard Turkish are two of the most prominent varieties within the London diaspora (Lytra & Baraç, 2009). Having said that, it is worth noting that in the UK context, diverse forms of Turkish have emerged due to the interplay between various Turkish varieties and the English language. A notable illustration of this phenomenon is the emergence of ‘Londralı’ (Londoner) Turkish, a term coined by İssa (Issa, 2005), which underlines the influence of the London environment on the linguistic development of these communities. This phenomenon is significant because it underscores how Turkish-speaking communities in London negotiate and adapt their linguistic identities in response to their sociocultural environment. Therefore, the family language repertoire of Asmin’s Family should be better seen from a perspective that they bring Cypriot Turkish, Standard Turkish and English as main resources in their daily communication.

These observations are crucial for understanding the family’s language repertoire within the framework of FLP. My research focuses on the agency of children in shaping FLP, and this linguistic repertoire provides the backdrop against which agency operates. By examining how Asmin and her family navigate these linguistic resources, I can better understand how they maintain, negotiate, and adapt their language practices in response to the multilingual setting of London.

As a Standard Turkish speaker from mainland Turkey, my interactions with Asmin’s family provided an additional layer of insight. Despite differences between Standard Turkish and Cypriot Turkish, there was no ambiguity in communication or sociocultural references during our interactions. In fact, Asmin and her mother, Feyza, noted that while dissimilarities exist in our speech patterns—rooted in my use of Standard Turkish and their use of Cypriot Turkish—these differences did not cause any communication barriers. This reflects the fluid and dynamic nature of language use in this family, where linguistic differences are navigated with ease and mutual understanding.

In the excerpts below in this analyses, I have italicised specific words or suffixes to illustrate instances where the distinctiveness of Cypriot Turkish is evident. This analysis

not only highlights the interplay between Standard Turkish and Cypriot Turkish but also connects to the broader theme of linguistic negotiation and identity formation within Turkish-speaking communities in London. The complex nature of Turkish dialects is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2: Context of the Study, which explores the sociolinguistic dynamics of Turkish-speaking communities in London.

Before moving into the analysis of the data, it is crucial to outline the key areas of focus in this chapter. This analysis explore how Asmin and Beyza, as young agents within a multilingual, intergenerational family setting, negotiate and enact language policies that reflect both family ideologies and broader societal influences. The chapter examines their agency in relation to language maintenance and practices, particularly how they navigate the competing expectations of different language varieties (Standard Turkish, Cypriot Turkish, and English) within the family context. In doing so, I draw on the theoretical framework of child agency within FLP to analyze how children's language choices, through their agentive acts, impact and are shaped by family dynamics and language ideologies.

By linking these theoretical perspectives to the experiences of Asmin and Beyza, I aim to demonstrate how these children actively participate in shaping the linguistic landscape of their family, challenging and reinforcing the established norms.

In the next section, I analyse the collected data in terms of examining how Asmin and Beyza negotiate language policy and enact their agency within the family's language ideologies, practices, and maintenance efforts in this multilingual, intergenerational setting.

#### **4.1.1. Shared Lived Experiences: Asmin's Role in the Intergenerational Transmission of Language and Culture**

It was Asmin's first year in this Turkish complementary school, but not the first time being there. Her mother Ferda and sister Vedia – who is also Beyza's (5) mother – had been actively involved in numerous school events over the years. This involvement was largely a result of Nazan's prominent role in organising school activities. For example, Ferda and her daughters had baked cookies for a bake sale at NLTS to support a Cypriot-Turkish child diagnosed with a serious disease. Asmin played a part by designing and printing the

tickets for the bake sale. Such activities fostered an environment in which Asmin felt she had a significant role within the Turkish-speaking communities in London.

Growing up as the youngest child in a family with a significant age gap between siblings, Asmin's (10) interactions with her older siblings were likely distinct from those of siblings with closer age differences, such as a lack of playful engagement. As a result, Asmin had potentially very limited experience to play, chat or sing with her siblings as they were adult individuals and working professionals. Furthermore, Asmin's life trajectory diverged from that of her older siblings. While Asmin was born into an environment where her parents had settled in London for nearly four decades, her older siblings were born during the early years of their parents' migration and adjustment to the country, making them multilingual second-generation adults. Consequently, the significant age gap and the family's size, along with the differing ways in which each sibling experienced family languages and culture due to their varying ages, emerged as key factors shaping Asmin's linguistic choices and language ideologies.

Asmin's active participation in the folk-dance performance described below, guided by family and community traditions, shows how children like Asmin enact their agency. While she follows instructions, her interactions with her family members and her positioning in the cultural event demonstrate how she negotiates her role in both the family and community context. This contributes to understanding how children participate in and influence family language practices.

These dynamics also influenced Asmin's position within the family structure. The vignette below demonstrates how her older siblings' experiences with family and minority community culture contributed to Asmin's learning as shared experiences, including her participation in a folk-dance performance at her complementary school fair for the first time:

Asmin entered the school canteen with the other students who had just finished their lessons and dressed for their upcoming performance. In the corner near the entrance, traditional Turkish foods prepared by the parents were standing on the tables lined up one after the other. The air of the canteen was filled with the smell of these fresh foods and the loud conversations of the parents who were waiting for their children's performances. Once little girl Beyza (5 years old) saw her aunt Asmin (10 years old), she jumped off her

mother's lap, went to Asmin and started tugging at her skirt. Ferda, who was carefully placing the cookies she made on the stand table, called Asmin to hand her a cookie. Looking quite excited, Asmin was trying to prevent Beyza from ruining her outfit, and on the other hand, she was telling her mother that she didn't want to eat. Meanwhile, Vedia (Asmin's big sister, Beyza's mother) approached to them and straightened the necklace around Asmin's neck. To Ferda, "There weren't such necklaces in my time. We used to wear coloured strings as jewellery, do you remember mom?" she said in Turkish. Ferda nodded and smiled as if she imagined the time when Vedia did her folk-dance performance in this school for some 20 years ago. "Back then, we used to sew your clothes with our own hands" Ferda replied. After looking at Asmin from head to toe for one last time, Vedia said, "Come on, you're ready. Don't forget to smile while performing, *ablam* ['my sister' in Turkish]. Always keep an eye on your teacher" and let her towards the stage. The classes to perform were lined up on the stage one after the other. After a while, Asmin's group took their places on the stage. Ferda turned her phone's camera on for recording her daughter's performance. Meanwhile, the teacher sat in a chair one step ahead of the children who are about to perform and warned the children to wait for his cue. Then, the famous Cypriot Turkish folk music (*Dillirga* – also known as *Tillirkotissa* in Cypriot Greek) started. The teacher gave the signal by clapping his hand which was a sign to start to the dance. Throughout the performance, which lasted for about 5 minutes, Asmin never forgot to smile and kept an eye on her teacher (Field narrative, 14 December 2019).



**Figure 22.** Asmin (standing on the right) and her classmates after their performance.

This vignette depicts the scene from Asmin's first dance performance at NLTS where Asmin's mother and older sister Vedia were helping her out into the stage. The conversation between Ferda and Vedia about the evolution of the dance costume over the years shows that children in the same family could experience the same cultural practices in different ways over time and space. The other conversation between Vedia and Asmin also illustrates that Vedia shared the knowledge about the folk-dance with her sister to comfort her. Because Ferda did not have such experience about performing in this school stage, Vedia took over an expert role to provide Asmin with the information which helped her to complete her dancing successfully ("Keep an eye on the teacher and never forgot to smile"). Folkloric dance performances in such contexts often have historical, cultural, and social significance and are passed down through generations as a part of a community's heritage. This transmission of experience is twofold. On the one hand, the older sister took an expert role towards the younger sibling as it is typically observed among multilingual siblings (Barron-Hauwaert, 2011). On the other hand, this type of experience-sharing enhances the traditional generational ordering within the family, which eventually impacts on the ideologies around home language policies. Understanding the underlying structures, patterns, or frameworks that influence Asmin's ideologies about her heritage culture is essential for comprehending how her individual agency operates within that context (Block, 2015). By following her older sister's directives regarding the dance performance in the excerpt above, Asmin shows compliance with this directive, which seems to enhance the generational order (Older sister Vedia as expert vs. Asmin as novice) within the family. Vedia (Asmin's older sister) reminds me of this specific event during the interview with her in my home visit to Asmin's Family to give an example about how her lived experiences help her to develop empathy with Asmin. She stated:

Excerpt 4. 1.

Do you remember the day Asmin perform that folk dance? I could sense how excited she was. Dressing up like that... I knew because I have been there. My experience as a British-Turkish, performing folk dance for some twenty years ago, is passing into my little sister. I do work with multilingual children and I always try to bring some elements from their home culture to my classroom during our plays. What I believe is, this kind of experiences motivates children to keep their [home] languages, their cultures. Seeing something

important, valuable for you has also valueable for some other people... That is what I care about. That's why I ask my mom [Ferda] to bring my little girl [Beyza] to the [NLTS] school even though she is too young to be a student there. The more she experiences this environment, the more she feels that it is a part of her identity (Translated from Turkish- parental interview data).

In the excerpt above, Vedia associates this one cultural practice (folkloric dance in Turkish complementary school) with Asmin's language socialisation. She believes that giving importance to those kind of cultural practices reinforces home language and cultural ties since they "motivates children to keep their [home] languages, their cultures" (Excerpt 4.1.). She also states that this practice is passed down through generations, from her to Asmin and from Asmin to Beyza. This kind of generational transmission is particularly noticeable in immigrant families, where children might not have immediate access to their family's trajectories preceding their emigration. Consequently, they may experience a sense of detachment from their family's core emotional foundations, such as their native land, heritage culture, and language, which may cause losing reference to crucial sources of identity and the meaningful affective and emotional bonds associated with them (DaSilva Iddings et al., 2022). Therefore, Vedia appears to make a concerted effort to connect her little sister Asmin (10 years old) and her daughter Beyza (5 years old) with the cultural and linguistic heritage inherited by their family across generations. Such cultural and language practices are rooted in culture and heritage can be integral components of the implicit language planning within families (Curdt-Christiansen & Sun, 2022). Consequently, this practice in Asmin's Family does not seem to be a merely random cultural replication occurring across different generations within one family. Instead, it is closely tied to shared cultural practices passed down by caregivers from their own primary socialisation and embraced by their children.

Vedia defines herself as a British-Turkish nursery teacher working with multilingual and multicultural children in one of the most culturally diverse areas in North London. Her profession has led her to recognise the significance of incorporating students' home languages and cultures into the classroom environment, as it serves as a motivator for them.

Vedia's own identity as a British-Turkish individual enables her to establish a social environment in which children feel at ease using their languages and expressing their

cultural pride and identity. This, in turn, may encourage children in her classroom to utilise their full linguistic repertoire in their social interactions.

The insights provided by Vedia on the cultural and linguistic practices within her family highlight the broader context of language socialisation and transmission. Building on this understanding, the following section presents the findings from Asmin's language portrait data, which offers a concrete illustration of how these generational and cultural influences manifest in her linguistic practices. Unfortunately, due to Beyza's young age (5 years old) at the time of the study, I was unable to apply the language portrait method to her, which limits our ability to explore similar dimensions of her language development.

#### **4.2. Analysis of Asmin's Language Portrait**

In my LP interviews with children, I aim to capture what they think about their linguistic and other communicative resources and experiences in relation to others, and to language ideologies, how they use the body silhouette to reflect on their bodily lived experiences of linguistic repertoire. These findings are then linked to my main research question: "How do children negotiate and enact their agency through FLP in Turkish-speaking families in the UK?".

During my visits to Asmin's Turkish complementary school, we built rapport, and Asmin became well-informed about my study. Consequently, we decided to conduct the language portrait interview during my first visit to this family's home.

As I entered the living room from the hallway, I immediately noticed that the TV was on, and they had been watching one of the Turkish soap-opera from one of the Turkey's broadcast channels. The living room boasted a door that led directly to the spacious backyard and a small window that looked into the kitchen. The overall home decor exuded a minimalist and modern style, except for one corner that stood out. In this particular corner, an array of photographs adorned the space. Positioned right next to the TV unit, this corner was dedicated to a photo album containing pictures of every family member, spanning generations from the grandparents to the grandchildren.

After a brief conversation, Ferda led Asmin and me into the kitchen to conduct the interview. Asmin and I were sitting in a large dinner table in the kitchen while Ferda was

waiting for us to complete the task in the next room. There was a piercing, high-pitch sound coming from the TV back in the living room where Ferda was watching, but Asmin did not seem disturbed by it. Yet, I placed the audio recorder in the opposite direction of where the TV sounds came from in terms of getting a clear voice recording.

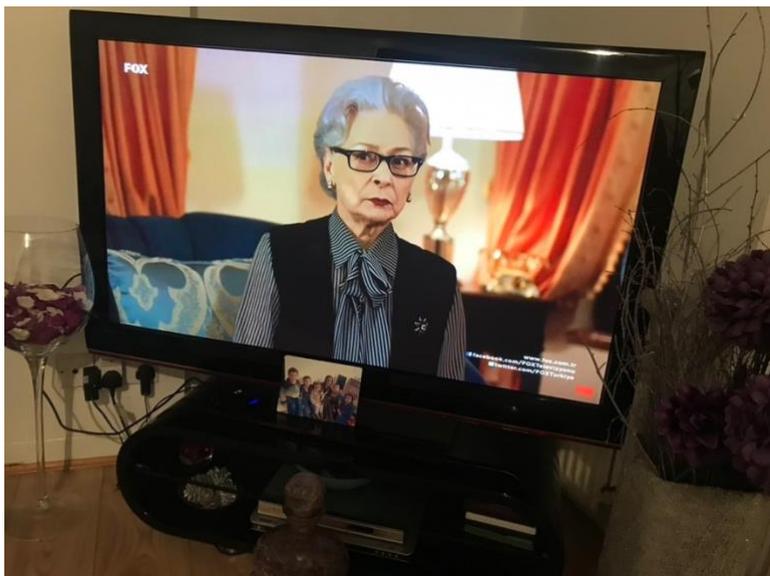
With the setting established and the context understood, I proceeded with the LP interview by following a structured procedure to explore Asmin's linguistic experiences and perceptions.

I followed the procedure below in my visit to Asmin's home for LP interview.

I asked Asmin to recall people, places, situations, and activities which they associate with particular ways of communicating, to consider not only her current relations with those languages but also those important in the past and those they wish to keep for the future. For this, I add supplementary questions to refine the task, such as "You might perhaps begin with languages or way of speaking that are currently important to you, and also think of those which are farther in the past or which might still occur", "What place would you allocate them in the picture?" "What do you think about the language use that are found to be in your environment?" (Busch, 2018, p. 8).

Then, I expected Asmin to choose colours that fit the different languages and ways of communication and to place them with regard to the body image. When introducing the research activity, I avoided using simplifications such as "use a different colour for every language that you speak" since it could reduce the complexity of their repertoire and overemphasise the idea of 'named' languages as bounded separate entities. Instead, I used a prompt which is adapted from Busch (2018, p.8):

"I ask you to use this space to represent the languages and ways of speaking that are important in your life. For example, you can think about your language use with particular people (mother, friend, grandparent ...), or places (home, school, holiday...) in your life. There are no right or wrong answers here. You can add captions or just explain what you did. Choose colours that fit different languages and ways of speaking which have a particular meaning for you".



**Figure 8.3.** A photo of Ferda and her grandchildren underneath the TV in Asmin’s Family’s living room.

Asmin decided to go with Turkish when we started our interview and barely switched to English during our conversations. I reminded her that there are no correct or wrong answers in this activity as she seemed a little bit anxious, and that she could switch between her languages or mix them whenever she wants. After explaining her about the task she is going to complete with me, I gave the tablet and pen to her and kept silent for a while for her to focus.

In the following section, I analyse the body image according to the metaphors structured by Asmin during the interview.

### **Body Image**

Language is at the heart, literally and metaphorically, of who we are, how we present ourselves, and how others see us (González, 2001, p. xix).

Having explored how was the nature of home setting while conducting LP with Asmin, I now turn to an analysis of the body image. This aspect of the LP offers a window into the participant’s embodied experiences, reflecting how their physical and emotional connections to language are represented. Through the body image, we can uncover how the participant children perceive and navigate their multilingual identity, as well as how these perceptions influence their language practices and interactions.



**Figure 23.** Asmin's Language Portrait

In their mixed-methods study, Soares et al. (2020) analysed 570 language portraits, sociolinguistic surveys, and conducted 21 semi-structured interviews with children aged 6 to 13 to examine how they represent and reflect on their multilingual repertoires. Through qualitative content analysis, the study identifies patterns in colour choices and language placement, providing insights into students' perceptions of their multilingualism.

Similar to their findings, recurring patterns emerge in my participants' LP data, such as structuring languages based on linguistic skills and body functions, as well as employing specific colour choices.

## Choice of Colour

Asmin started her drawings with green colour for English in the right up hand and the right leg. Then, she moved the left hand by colouring this part of body with red for Turkish. She also assigned the left leg with orange colour for Spanish language. She started her presentation for her choice of colours as below:

### Excerpt 4.2.

- 1 İngilizce için yeşili seçtim çünkü burası biraz çok yeşildir. Türk bayrağı da kırmızı  
(I chose green for English because it's a bit too green here. Since Turkish flag)
- 2 olduğu için buraları kırmızıya boyadım. İşte burası turuncu çünkü İspanyol bayrağı  
(is red, I coloured these parts in red. Also, here it's orange for Spanish,)
- 3 sarı ve kırmızıdır ama yani karıştırınca turuncu olur.  
(because their flag is red and yellow but it becomes orange when you mix them.)

Asmin's choice of green to represent the English language and red for Turkish in her body image (LP) task reveals how deeply embedded her linguistic choices are within her bodily and environmental experiences. Previous studies have indicated that individuals often select colours based on their personal world knowledge and lived experiences (Busch, 2018b; Soares et al., 2020). In line 1, Asmin associates the green colour with English, justified by the child's observation that "the UK is a bit too green," which aligns with her immediate environmental experience in the UK, where green landscapes are a prominent feature. This choice suggests that her perception of the English language is tied not only to her linguistic resource but also to her sensory and emotional experiences of her surroundings. This aligns with the idea that body images in language portraits are not merely static symbols of communicative resources but are embedded in a broader evaluative stance informed by personal and cultural histories.

Similarly, the choice of red for Turkish because it represents the Turkish flag in lines 2 and 3 highlights how national symbols and cultural identities are integrated into her linguistic repertoire. This suggests that Asmin's colour choices are not random but are deeply influenced by culturally significant symbols that are visually and emotionally salient to her. Additionally, the Turkish language is closely tied to her sense of cultural heritage and national identity, a connection that may influence her use and perception of the language in different contexts.

When she chooses orange for Spanish, explaining that it results from mixing the red and yellow of the Spanish flag, this demonstrates a conceptual blending process. She is not just passively absorbing cultural symbols but actively engaging with them, creating a new colour that represents her understanding of Spanish. This creative choice indicates an evaluative process where the child blends her knowledge of Spanish with her perception of its cultural symbols, crafting a unique representation in her linguistic repertoire.

In light of Busch's (2021) notion that body images in language portraits encompass an evaluative stance that reflects one's emotional experiences and exposure to various language ideologies, these colour choices reveal how the child's repertoire is shaped by her interactions with her environment, cultural symbols, and the languages she uses. The child's selection of colours for each language suggests that her linguistic repertoire is not just a collection of languages she speaks but a dynamic, lived experience that includes emotional and cultural dimensions. This reinforces the importance of understanding linguistic repertoires as deeply connected to personal and cultural histories, as well as the emotional experiences that come with language use.

### **Language Placement**

In Asmin's drawing, the colour for English and Turkish clearly dominates the portrait which she confirms that those languages find more space to practice in her daily life than Spanish. Furthermore, Asmin located the languages she considers to be best at on the upper part of the body.

#### Excerpt 4.3.

- 4 Ben İngilizce *gonuşurkan* da Türkçe *gonuşurkan* da zorlanmam. Çünkü onları her gün  
(I feel comfortable speaking English and Turkish. Because I use them every day)
- 5 kullanırım. Ama İspanyolcayı sadece okulda görürüm. Bir da İspanyolca şarkılarda.  
(But, Spanish appears only in my classroom and some pop music I like to listen to.)
- 6 İngilizceyi okuyup yazabilirim ama Türkçe yazmayı ve okumayı yeni öğrenirim.  
(I can read and write in English but I am just learning to write and read in Turkish ((at Turkish complementary school)).)
- 7 İspanyolcayı bu bacağıma yaptım. Bu dili o kadar bilmem ama ilerde de konuşmak  
isterim.  
(I did the Spanish on left leg. I don't speak this language that much, but I would like  
to speak it in the future.)

In Asmin's Language Portrait interview, her self-perception of linguistic skills reveals an interesting dynamic between the languages she actively uses and those she aspires to master. As a Turkish-English bilingual child born and raised in London, she expresses a sense of comfort and confidence with both English and Turkish, stating, "I feel comfortable speaking English and Turkish. Because I use them every day" in line 4. These languages are deeply embedded in her daily life, reflecting her established and inherited linguistic repertoire.

However, her relationship with Spanish, which she studies as a modern foreign language in her mainstream school for three years, introduces a more agentive aspect to her linguistic identity. The participant acknowledges that Spanish primarily appears "in my classroom and some pop music I like to listen to" in line 5. Unlike English and Turkish, Spanish is not yet a fully integrated part of her everyday life. This is further emphasised by her decision to place Spanish on her left leg in the LP, a symbolic choice that may

indicate her perception of Spanish as a language that supports her but is not yet central to her linguistic identity.

Crucially, her statement, “I don’t speak this language that much, but I would like to speak it in the future,” in line 7 reveals a significant degree of agency. She is not merely passively engaged with Spanish as a subject in school; instead, she expresses a clear desire to adopt it. This aspiration suggests that she sees Spanish as a language of personal choice and future potential, rather than one she has simply inherited. This agentive stance highlights her active role in shaping her linguistic repertoire, marking Spanish as a language she is determined to embrace and integrate more fully into her life. Asmin’s desire to speak more Spanish in the future, despite limited exposure, could be linked to agency as an aspirational and future-oriented practice. This aligns with the social construction of childhood (Oswell, 2013) where children’s agency extends beyond immediate choices. Her multilingual self-perception (e.g., mapping Spanish onto her left leg in the LP) reflects how agency is expressed through embodiment and affect, resonating with childhood studies’ emphasis on lived experience (Esser et al., 2016).

Thus, Asmin’s LP and interview data illustrate a nuanced interplay between inherited linguistic resources (English and Turkish) and her aspirational engagement with a new language (Spanish). Body image can be used for whether communicative resources are available and accessible in a certain moment or they are the projections towards the future. This dynamic underscores the importance of agency in the ongoing development of her linguistic repertoire, particularly in relation to languages she chooses to adopt and invest in for the future.

Another pattern observed in Asmin’s LP productions is that she structured the body image according to the functions of body parts. She offers an explanation to that as below:

Excerpt 4.4.

8	Asmin	Beynimde bu üçü de var ama en çok İngilizcedir. Rüyalarımı bile İngilizce görürüm.
---	-------	--

(In my brain, I can think in all these languages but I say it's mostly English. Even my dreams are in English.)

9	Interviewer	Why did you say that? I mean, the thing about dreaming in English.
10	Asmin	Çünkü ben duymuştum bir kere, insanlar en çok kullandığı dilde rüya görür. (Well, because I heard that people dream in the language they use most.)
11	Asmin	Ağzımı Türkçe yaptım. Bazen Türkçe çok <i>gonuşurum</i> insanlarnan. Mesela annemnen, (Here is my mouth in Turkish. I speak too much Turkish actually... with mom,)
12	Asmin	babamnan, bazen kardeşlerimnen ve yeğenlerimnen, Kıbrıs'ta nenemlernen,  (dad, sometimes with my siblings, niece and nephews, my grandparents and relatives)
13	Asmin	başka akrabalarımnan, Türk okulunda, bayram yemeğine gittiğimizde... (in Cyprus, at Turkish school and at Eid dinner...)
14	Asmin	Kalbimi de bu ikisiyle boyamak isterim. Bir Türkçe bir İngilizce. Benim hayatımda  (I would like to colour my heart with English and Turkish. It's because I always)
15	Asmin	hep bu ikisi çok vardır. Yani ben bu iki dilde büyüdüm. (have those two languages in my life. I mean, I grew up with these languages.)

Asmin's approach to structuring her body image in the LP task reveals a deep connection between her language use and the functions of specific body parts. This metaphorical mapping reflects how she internalises her multilingual repertoire in relation to her bodily experiences and emotional life.

Her statement, "In my brain, I can think in all these languages but I say it's mostly English," in line 8 illustrates that English dominates her cognitive processes, a language deeply embedded in her mental and intellectual life. The fact that she also dreams in English reinforces the idea that English has become her primary language of thought, likely due to its predominant use in her everyday life and social interactions. This aligns with the idea that body memories and lived experiences shape the way language is embedded in different aspects of self-perception.

The association of Turkish with her mouth underscores its role as a key communicative tool in her interactions with family and her community. The extensive use of Turkish in her social life, particularly with close family members and during cultural events like Eid, highlights its significance in her personal and cultural identity. This choice emphasises the lived experience of using Turkish in emotionally significant and culturally rooted contexts, which in turn reinforces its presence in her body image.

Asmin's desire to color her heart with both English and Turkish is particularly telling. The heart is often seen as a symbol of deep emotional connection and identity (Busch, 2018a), suggesting that she feels a strong, dual attachment to both languages. This desire reflects how her body image serves as a space where her emotional life is intertwined with her linguistic repertoire. The heart, in this case, becomes a metaphor for her bilingual identity, representing how she navigates her linguistic worlds emotionally and culturally. Asmin avoids using evaluative words for one of these languages in Line 14 and 15 where she presents her emotional and intimate views on her repertoire. This can be interpreted that there is no linguistic hierarchy in her feelings for these languages.

The current analysis focuses on a) what Asmin reported in her LP interview that she is doing with her language(s) in everyday interactions and b) how these actions affect the language policy of Fam 4. Regarding 'what she is doing with her languages', I investigate the negotiation and construction of her language beliefs and practices as well as her

agentive acts in the discussion of family language policies which eventually shape Fam 4's FLP.

### 4.3. Generational Influence and Child Agency: Asmin's Role in Family Language Dynamics

I start here with Asmin's perspective about the languages they speak in the home. She stated that there is no strict rule about speaking Turkish at home:

#### Excerpt 4.5.

- |    |             |  |
|----|-------------|--|
| 16 | Asmin       | Annem ve babam bizimle Türkçe <i>gonuşun</i> der ama kural yoktur.<br>(My parents say 'Speak Turkish' with us, but there is no strict rule.)                                     |
| 17 | Asmin       | Daha çok İngilizce <i>gonuşuruk</i> kardeşlerimnen.<br>(I speak mainly in English with my siblings.)   |
| 18 | Interviewer | Peki anne ve babanla sadece Türkçe mi konuşursun? Onlar İngilizce biliyor mu?<br>(So, do you only speak Turkish with your parents? Do they speak English?)                       |
| 19 | Asmin       | Hmm. Aslında babam İngilizce bilir, annem de İngilizce konuştuğumda anlıyor.<br>(Well... My dad in fact speaks English, and my mom understands most of it when I speak English.) |
| 20 | Interviewer | Sen onlarla evde ya da dışarda İngilizce konuşuyor musun peki?<br>(Do you ever speak in English with them at home or outside?)   |
| 21 | Asmin       | Hayır, ben onlarnan Türkçe <i>gonuşurum</i> hep.   |

(No. It's only Turkish with my parents.)

22 Interviewer Neden? Seni anlamayacaklarından mi endişeleniyorsun?  
(Why is that? Are you worried that they won't understand you?)

23 Asmin Ben anneme İngilizce konuşsam anlar ama bilmiyorum, ben yine de Türkçe konuşmak istiyorum.  
(She will understand me if I speak English, but I don't know, I want to speak Turkish anyway.)

24 Asmin Ben doğduğumdan beri... Yani, onlarla hep Türkçe *gonuştum*. Böyle daha rahat hissederim.  
(Ever since I was born... I mean, I've always spoken to them in Turkish, I feel more comfortable that way.)

In the excerpt, Asmin pointed that her parents aim to establish Turkish as the language-of-interaction at home, but they do not strictly follow a 'Speak Turkish' rule. It is the parents' desire to communicate in Turkish with their children, however they do not interfere in the communication of siblings who usually speak in English between themselves (Line 16 and 17). During the course of time I spent with this family, I observed that Asmin and her siblings speak confidently and fluently in both Turkish and English, and they frequently switch between these languages. The intersibling communication is mainly English as Asmin stated in Turn 17, however, this does not challenge the establishment of Turkish as the language-of- interaction at home. The siblings quickly draw from their linguistic repertoire, shifting from English to Turkish when their parents are present or there is a need to communicate in Turkish (i.e., calling their relatives in Cyprus). Asmin's choice to primarily speak English with her siblings indicates a dynamic interplay between the languages she uses, depending on the context and the interlocutors. This demonstrates her ability to navigate and negotiate her linguistic practices within

different family settings. These two parallel norms (parent-child interaction in Turkish, sibling-sibling interaction in English and Turkish) illustrate the multi-layered and dynamic nature of this family's language policies.

Asmin's statement, "Ben anneme İngilizce konuşsam anlar ama bilmiyorum, ben yine de Türkçe konuşmak istiyorum" (She will understand me if I speak English, but I don't know, I want to speak Turkish anyway) in line 23, reflects a strong sense of agency. Even though she has the option to speak English, she chooses Turkish because it makes her feel 'more comfortable'. This decision is not solely based on external expectations or limitations but on her personal preference and emotional connection to the language. Her use of Turkish with her parents seems to be a deliberate act that reinforces her cultural identity and aligns with her comfort and familiarity.

Her compliance to parental desire of speaking Turkish is a form of agency. She is not only enacting her agency in FLP in her compliance with parental choices but also enforcing this compliancy regime by setting Turkish as the compliant code to use with her parents, and English and Turkish as the compliant codes with her siblings. In other words, she justifies her compliance in its relation to the language and interlocutor (Palviainen & Boyd, 2013) and co-construct FLP by playing an agentive role in terms of code selection in her interactions with other family members. This compliance regime suggests that she values maintaining Turkish within the family context, aligning herself with the family's shared expectations and eventually lead to certain linguistic norms.

Asmin's choice to speak Turkish with her parents is rooted in her long-term linguistic practice, as she mentions, "Ben doğduğumdan beri... Yani, onlarla hep Türkçe konuştum. Böyle daha rahat hissederim" (Ever since I was born... I mean, I've always spoken to them in Turkish, I feel more comfortable that way) in line 24. This temporal aspect indicates that her linguistic preferences have been shaped by her experiences over time, suggesting a deeply ingrained comfort with Turkish in her interactions with her parents.

The space in which these interactions occur is also significant. Within the family home, Turkish becomes the dominant language, especially in interactions with her parents. However, in her interactions with siblings, the use of English dominates, demonstrating a different linguistic space. Asmin's ability to navigate these linguistic spaces by flexibly drawing from her linguistic repertoire, depending on the context and the interlocutors,

highlights the dynamic and context-sensitive nature of her language use. Her translanguaging practices, particularly her shift toward Turkish when communicating with her parents or extended family members (e.g., relatives in Cyprus) further illustrates her agentive role in adapting her linguistic practices to fit the expectations of different social spaces. Thus, as Bollig and Kelle (2016) state, a child's agency emerges through practices shaped by both time and space.

Asmin's participation to the 'Speak Turkish' rule is not simply a response to her parents' directive; that's rather her indexing of maintaining Turkish as part of her linguistic identity ideologies behind this expectation. As Smith-Christmas (2020) pointed out 'Speak Language X' can be indexed in multiple ways on multiple levels in family interactions, for instance, that Language X is important for cultural and social reasons, or that it benefits the child to be bilingual. In this interview while the child drew a heart shape and coloured it with half Turkish and half English (See Figure 2), she states that the desire for maintaining her home language is not only established in her parent's utterance, it is also indicating that she views Turkish as part of her identity, which is one of the underlying expectations of speaking Turkish in her everyday family interaction and the interaction with extended family members:

Excerpt 4.6.

25	Interviewer	İlerde sen de çocuklarına Türkçe öğretmek ister misin? (Do you want to teach Turkish to your children in the future?)
26	Asmin	(without hesitation) Evet, çünkü biz Türküz ve Kıbrıstan <i>gelirik</i> . (Yes, because we are Turkish and come from Cyprus.)
27	Asmin	<b>So</b> , biz gidersek Kıbrıs'a, hep Türkçe <i>gonuşacayık</i> ailemizle. (So, we'll always speak Turkish with our family when we go to Cyprus.)
28	Interviewer	Tatillerde gidiyor musunuz Kıbrıs'a?

(Do you go to Cyprus on holidays?)		
29	Asmin	Her sene 3-4 hafta gideriz. Orda nenem var, ve bazı yeğenlerim. (We visit my grandma and other relatives for 3-4 week every summer.)
30	Asmin	Onlarnan zaten hep Türkçe <i>gonuşurum</i> çünkü İngilizce bilmezler. (I always speak Turkish with them because they don't speak English.)

In this excerpt, Asmin reinforced her language ideologies from a cultural/heritage point by stating “We’re Turkish, we speak Turkish when we go to Cyprus” in Line 26 and 27. Her use of the inclusive “WE” when discussing future language practices (“WE are Turkish and come from Cyprus,” “WE’ll always speak Turkish OUR family”) suggests a collective identity that she aligns with. This collective identity is reinforced by her reference to past practices and her anticipation of future practices, which serve to solidify her sense of belonging to the Turkish-Cypriot community. Her responses also indicate a strong sense of continuity, where the past, present, and future are linked through the ongoing practice of speaking Turkish.

The entanglement of ethnic, national, and cultural traits in Asmin's discourse is evident. Her identification as Turkish and her connection to Cyprus extend beyond nationality, constituting what Purkardhofer (2021) terms a broader ethno-natio-cultural identity that shapes her linguistic choices and practices. This context shapes her sense of responsibility to maintain and transmit Turkish, not just as a language, but as a key component of her identity and heritage. The complexity of this identity is reflected in her commitment to passing on the language, which is intertwined with cultural practices and familial expectations that are rooted in her understanding of her ethno-natio-cultural background. What is more, her alignment with the parental expectations about speaking the minority language appears to be negotiated in different times and spaces. That is, this establishment

of speaking Turkish ‘at home’, or in ‘Cyprus’ indicates that this directive negotiated in home as well as in their visits to Cyprus.

In my interview with Asmin’s mother Ferda, she also explained her expectations from their children as:

Excerpt 4.7.

... Of course, we visit my family in Cyprus every summer. Apart from that, I talk to my mother and siblings at least once a week. But I don’t talk alone. I ask Asmin to talk to them, so that they don’t forget each other. I want my mother to see that Asmin can speak Turkish. If my children could not speak Turkish, I would be very embarrassed to my mother (*Parental Interview* -translated into English).

It is clear from the mother’s account that she employs regular audio/video calls as a strategy to keep her children connected with not only their minority language but also extended family members in their country of origin. The mother’s strategic use of video calls aligns with the concept of technology as a language management tool for creating and extending the linguistic environment for the child, as described by Said (2021). She has expectations about her children to maintain their minority language and feels that it would be very upsetting to see that her children could not communicate in her mother tongue. The mother’s concern about her child’s Turkish proficiency and desire to impress her family in Cyprus brings the discussion of parental anxieties over their children’s multilingual language and multicultural identity development. This aligns with findings from Lytra's (2012) research, where Turkish-speaking parents expressed a similar pressure to conform to “standard” Turkish as a marker of Turkish identity, coupled with concerns about their children's linguistic ability if it deviates from this idealised norm.

On the other hand, the responsibility that Ferda has been taking over the years seems a generational order (from her mother to Ferda, then Ferda to Asmin) which shapes the language policy of this family. By appealing to her parents’ expectations, Asmin co-constructs the existent structures this family set up and positions herself in alignment with the expected generational paradigm.

#### **4.4. Blurring Boundaries: The Generalised Use of “Türkçe” in Asmin’s Family**

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Asmin's Family predominantly speaks in the Cypriot Turkish (CT) vernacular, while the media they consume -such as TV shows and written material- as well as the Turkish school teaching materials and my interactions with them as a researcher, rely on Standard Turkish (ST). One noticeable difference between these two varieties is the use of the suffix '-nen' in CT to convey the meaning of 'with,' whereas ST typically employs the suffix '-le.' This variation can be observed in Excerpts 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6, where Asmin consistently uses the '-nen' suffix in her utterances. Despite this variation, the difference does not affect the meaning or cause any confusion in our communication.

However, in Excerpt 4.5, where Asmin discusses her parents' language ideologies, a more subtle shift occurs. Asmin uses the CT form of the verb 'to speak' -'gonuş-'- while I, as a researcher using ST, employ the standard form, 'konuş-.' This difference becomes particularly noticeable in Lines 16 and 17, where Asmin uses 'gonuşun' and 'gonuşuruk' (CT forms), but then switches to the ST form 'konuştuğumda' in Line 19 after I use 'konuşursun' in Line 18. Following this brief switch to the ST variant, she reverts to the CT form in the rest of the conversation.

This interaction highlights an interesting dynamic of linguistic accommodation and the flexibility of language use within Turkish-speaking communities. While Asmin initially adjusts her speech to align with the ST form I used, she quickly returns to the CT version that is more familiar and comfortable for her. This demonstrates how speakers within Turkish-speaking communities, particularly those like Asmin who are more accustomed to the CT vernacular, navigate between different varieties of Turkish depending on the context. Such alternations between CT and ST are not uncommon in the Turkish-speaking diaspora, particularly in multilingual environments like the UK, where speakers are frequently exposed to different varieties through media, education, and interaction with different groups.

Moreover, Asmin's switch between CT and ST, as seen in the excerpt, reflects broader language ideologies at play within the Turkish Cypriot community. Studies have shown that while ST is often associated with higher levels of education and prestige (Çavuşoğlu, 2021; Lytra, 2012), CT remains a strong marker of identity among Turkish Cypriots. This dynamic of shifting between ST and CT, particularly in contexts involving authority

figures like teachers or researchers, highlights how language ideologies influence everyday language practices, while also illustrating the flexibility and resilience of Cypriot Turkish within the diaspora.

During my interactions with Asmin's Family, I noticed that they did not seem to distinguish between Standard Turkish (ST), Cypriot Turkish (CT) unless I specifically brought it up. For them, their linguistic repertoire -both the parents and that of their children—was collectively referred to as “Türkçe” (Turkish). Similarly, Lytra (2012) in her study of Cypriot Turkish parents in the UK, observed that they did not appear to distinguish between the various Turkish dialects either.

In the case of Asmin's Family, the absence of overt distinctions between varieties suggests that the boundaries between ST and CT may not be as relevant or salient in their daily lives. Instead, their use of the term “Türkçe” reflects a pragmatic and inclusive approach to their linguistic practices.

The investigation of Asmin's LP has shown that aligning with parental language policy is an enactment of agency since the language choices and practices are negotiated and constructed over time and space even when the child is being compliant with her parents. Additionally, this study has illustrated that siblings use different linguistic norms with each other and with their parents (and their extended family members). Thus, these different norms create the generational dimensions in terms of language choice and use.

In the following section, I present a selection of the conversational data from the interactions between Asmin and the other child participant Beyza.

#### **4.5. From Novice to Negotiator: Beyza's Agency in a Multilingual Family Setting**

As I mentioned above, there is another child participant from Fam 4 that took part in this study. Beyza (aged five), who is the granddaughter to Ferda and niece to Asmin, had spent almost half of the week in Asmin's home, playing with her aunt. In comparison with her aunt Asmin, Beyza was in relatively early stage of developing her linguistic resources. She had just started primary school when I conducted this study. Her family decided to send her to Turkish complementary school once she reaches age 7, although she visited

the Turkish complementary school that Asmin enrolled with her grandmothers most of the time. Beyza's mother Vedia reported that her husband and herself as Turkish-English bilinguals had no specific explicit language policy at their own home, however, they mainly spoke English to each other and try to speak in both languages to their daughter. They relied on Beyza's grandparents in practising Turkish, she stated. In the excerpt below, Vedia continued:

Excerpt 4.8.

I'm a nursery teacher myself who is working with mainly multilingual children. Therefore, I'm well aware of the importance of raising a multilingual child. Because of my long working hours, my mom and Nazan (Beyza's grandparents) spend more time with her than we do. I believe that she'll improve in Turkish just as I did when I was a child. Honestly, practising the language with an experienced mother like mine would be the best option we could have (Parental Interview – translated into English)

Vedia's reliance on her own mother (Ferda) for transmitting Turkish to her daughter (Beyza) highlights the importance of intergenerational language transmission within the family. By positioning Ferda as the linguistic expert and Beyza as the novice, Vedia is reinforcing the traditional generational roles where the elder passes down linguistic knowledge to the younger generation. This practice aligns with the broader concept of child agency within FLP, where children's language development is seen not only as a result of direct parental influence but also through the involvement of extended family members such as grandparents (Kopeliovich, 2013; Ruby, 2012; Smith-Christmas, 2014).

The excerpt illustrates how Beyza's linguistic environment is shaped by her interactions with her grandparents, particularly her grandmother, who plays a crucial role in maintaining the Turkish language within the family. This intergenerational transmission is not just about language learning but also about preserving cultural and ethnic identity.

The emphasis on Ferda's role as an "experienced mother" underscores the belief that language learning is not solely a formal educational process but one that is embedded in everyday interactions within the family. This approach aligns with Vedia's professional understanding of multilingualism, highlighting a conscious effort to raise Beyza in a

multilingual environment, even if the explicit language policy at home is not rigidly defined.

In my observations, I also noted down that Ferda has played the expert role in her interactions with Beyza:

Excerpt 4.9.

... Beyza started to jump and ask for some snacks by saying: “Nene bana **crisps** ver” (Granny, give me some crisps!) from a little window opening to the living room from the kitchen. Ferda, got up to fetch a bag of crisp from the cellar in the hall. I took this opportunity as a short break in order to take my notes properly, because of fact that it was difficult to take notes while leading the conversation.

Before giving a packet of crisps to Beyza (5years old), Ferda, the grandmother, asked:

31 Ferda Ne istedin nenem? Bir daha söyle.  
(What did you want, my girl? Say it again.)

32 Beyza **Crisps.**

33 Ferda Nasıl söyleriz onu?  
(How do we say it?)

34 Beyza Hmm.

35 Ferda Nenecim **crisps** verir misin?  
(Grandma, can you give me some crisps?)

36 Beyza Nene **crisps** verir misin?  
(Granny, can you give me some crisps?)

37 Ferda Al bakalım, kibar kızım benim.  
(There you go, my kind girl.)

In this exchange, Ferda, the grandmother, assumes the role of the linguistic expert, guiding Beyza toward the expected norms of polite language. Ferda's effort to correct Beyza's request begins in Line 31 with the directive "Ne istedin nenem? Bir daha söyle." (What did you want, my girl? Say it again). This line indicates Ferda's intention to prompt Beyza to reflect on her language choice and use a more polite form.

When Beyza responds simply with "Crisps" in Line 32, Ferda does not accept this direct reply. Instead, she models the desired polite form in Line 35 by saying, "Nenecim crisps verir misin?" (Grandma, can you give me some crisps?). This modelling aligns with the repetition strategy described by Lanza (1997), where adults repeat children's utterances in language B (in this case, Turkish), embedding the polite code within the repetition.

Ferda's use of "Nasil söyleriz onu?" (How do we say it?) in Line 33 further emphasises the expected norm. The inclusive "WE" implies that this is a family standard, not just an isolated correction. Ferda's approach suggests that the politeness norm she is reinforcing has been accreted over multiple interactions, becoming a linguistic norm within the family. The use of "WE" by both Ferda in her interaction with Beyza and by Asmin the excerpt 4.6., Line 26 and 27 suggests a strong sense of collective identity within the family. This collective "WE" is not seen just a pronoun but as a marker of the family's shared values, cultural heritage, and linguistic norms. In Ferda's case, "WE" reinforces the expected politeness within the family, framing it as a communal standard that everyone, including the youngest members, is expected to uphold. Similarly, Asmin's use of "WE" in her LP data reflects her alignment with the family's linguistic practices and her identification with the collective cultural identity. This pattern of "WE" across different family members and generations highlights how language is used to construct and reinforce a sense of belonging and shared responsibility in maintaining the family's cultural and linguistic heritage.

The element of politeness, closely associated with Ferda as the grandmother, is significant in this generational dynamic. Generational order shapes language choice and how children's compliance aligns with expected roles (Smith-Christmas, 2020). Ferda's role

as the elder in the household includes the responsibility of ensuring that Beyza internalises these polite forms of expression, which are integral to the family's linguistic identity.

In Line 37, when Ferda says, “Al bakalım, kibar kızım benim” (There you go, my kind girl), she not only rewards Beyza's compliance but also reinforces the importance of using polite language. This act of correction and reinforcement shows that the polite code is not just a momentary expectation but a consistent linguistic norm in the family. Beyza, as a five-year-old, is in the process of learning these interactional norms, understanding that within the “we” of the family, asking for something requires the use of polite language.

There was no resistance from Beyza during this interaction, indicating that the practice of modeling Turkish by her grandmother has become an established norm within their family dynamics. This norm, repeatedly observed in various interactions, reinforces the generational positioning where Ferda assumes the role of the expert and Beyza, the novice. This generational dynamic is also in line with the expectations set by Beyza's mother, as previously discussed in Excerpt 4.7. Beyza's enactment of agency here is subtle but significant—by not resisting these negotiated roles, she aligns with the family's linguistic practices and reinforces the existing language norms within the household.

On the other hand, the power relationship between Beyza and Asmin is more flexible. Beyza frequently translanguaged across her linguistic repertoire while speaking with Asmin during my home visits and in the recordings. Beyza had the freedom to use Asmin's own room, to play with her toys whenever she wants. Therefore, she was like a little sister to Asmin. An example of this given below, Asmin and Beyza were water colouring together. There was a set of brushes of different colours. Beyza wanted to

change her brushes with the green one and Asmin took this opportunity as a practising moment for colours in Turkish.



**Figure 24.**

Beyza is sitting in a table and painting.

Excerpt 4.10.

38 Beyza *Teyze*, where is the water?

(Aunty)

39 Asmin I'll get you some.

40 Beyza Can I get another brush?

41 Asmin You can get another brush.

42 Asmin: You don't need to use the same brush on the same paint.

43 Asmin Bak bir sürü var.

(Look, there are a lot.)

44	Beyza	Bunu alacağım.  (I'll get this one.)
45	Asmin	Yeşili mi?  (Is it the green one?)
46	Beyza	Uh-huh.
47	Asmin	Ye-şil.  ((Spelling)) (Green)
48	Beyza	((Ignores)). Ohh! ((the brush is very dry, she seeks help))

In Line 49, Asmin attempts to establish a compliance regime by taking on the role of a language expert, likely modelling her behaviour on how her mother or teachers correct her. When Beyza chooses a green brush, Asmin seizes this as a learning opportunity, asking, “Yeşili mi?” and spelling out the word “Ye-şil” [IPA: /je'ʃil/] again in Line 51. Beyza’s non-response to Asmin's attempt to model the Turkish word for “green” suggests a resistance to this imposed role. Her focus remains on her immediate task—painting—and she disregards Asmin’s effort to steer the interaction towards language practice. This silence can be seen as a subtle form of non-compliance, where Beyza exercises her agency by opting out of the didactic moment. As it is well-emphasised in recent FLP research focusing on children’s agentive role, children’s agency enactments are complex and multi-layered which can be indexed in multiple ways on multiple levels (Canagarajah, 2008; Gafaranga, 2010; Revis, 2016; Smith-Christmas, 2020; Smith-Christmas, 2021). In this example, we see the same child, Beyza, was being aligned with her grandmother in Excerpt 4.8, while she resisted to the norm of interaction with Asmin in Excerpt 4.9.

Asmin appears to be enforcing a linguistic norm of practicing Turkish, reflecting the broader family expectation of maintaining Turkish. This mirrors the behaviour of older family members, like the grandmother, who also engage in language modelling. However,

the interaction suggests that the norm is not rigidly adhered to in this sibling-like relationship.

The informal and playful nature of Asmin and Beyza's relationship means that these norms are more fluid. Beyza's translanguaging between English and Turkish, and her decision not to engage with Asmin's language modelling, illustrates a flexibility in applying these linguistic norms within their interactions.

Beyza's translanguaging between English and Turkish highlights her dynamic use of her linguistic repertoire. Unlike her interactions with her grandmother, where Turkish is more strictly enforced, here Beyza navigates her linguistic resources more freely. This not only demonstrates her multilingual competency but also reflects her preference for English in certain contexts, particularly when she is engaged in an activity like painting.

Asmin's role in expanding Beyza's linguistic repertoire by attempting to introduce new vocabulary or practice pronunciation reflects her understanding of her own bilingual skills. However, Beyza's lack of engagement with this attempt shows that the expansion of linguistic repertoire is not always a linear or straightforward process and is influenced by the child's immediate interests and context (Obojska, 2019; Purkarthofer, 2021).

The interaction between Asmin and Beyza is less about enforcing generational hierarchies and more about a peer-like relationship where roles are negotiated on the spot. Asmin does assume a slightly authoritative role by trying to teach Beyza, but this authority is not strictly adhered to or accepted by Beyza. Additionally, Beyza exercises her agency by not fully accepting the role of a learner in this context. Unlike her interactions with her grandmother, where she aligns with the expected novice role, here she resists being positioned as a language learner. This resistance suggests that generational positioning is more flexible among siblings and peers than in adult-child interactions.

#### **4.6. Navigating Family Gatherings, Cultural Practices, and Covid-19**

During the Covid-19 lockdown in May 2021, London was still grappling with the constraints imposed by the pandemic, and social interactions had to be carefully managed, even during significant cultural events. It was Ramadan Eid, a time traditionally marked by gatherings, prayers, and celebrations within the Turkish-Cypriot community. Asmin's Family, a multigenerational household, found themselves in a unique situation—

attempting to preserve the spirit of the Eid celebration while adhering to the necessary health precautions. On the first day of Eid, several family members, including Vedia and Beyza, gathered at the family home. Anticipating that this gathering might offer valuable insights into how the family navigates socialisation and interaction under pandemic restrictions, I arranged a video call with them beforehand. The atmosphere was a mix of anticipation and adaptation, as they balanced the tension between maintaining cherished traditions and ensuring everyone's safety.

Conducting the observation online posed challenges; overlapping conversations were common, and there was constant movement in the living room as they prepared for the Eid meal. Throughout our call, interruptions occurred, with additional calls coming in from extended family members to share Eid greetings. During this, I asked Asmin if she had contributed anything to her scrapbook project. Although she had not produced much, she proposed the idea of creating a digital scrapbook instead. To support this, she asked her mother to record a video of the moment captured in the excerpt below and shared it with me.

In the video, Vedia, found a creative solution to uphold the custom of hand-kissing -a gesture of respect and blessing integral to Eid celebrations. She inflated a latex glove, tied it to a potato masher, and inscribed "Elimi öpün" ("Kiss my hand") on the glove. This playful yet poignant creation served as a symbolic stand-in for the traditional act of kissing an elder's hand, a practice that could not be performed in the usual manner due to the risk of virus transmission. The moment was both playful and rich with cultural significance, encapsulating the family's effort to preserve their traditions while adapting to the constraints of the pandemic. Other family members, including their younger sister Ayse and their mother Ferda, observed and participated in the scene.



**Figure 25.** Asmin is hand-kissing an inflated latex glove.

Excerpt 4.11.

49	Vedia	Come kiss my hand honey.
50	Asmin	((kisses the latex glove written 'kiss my hand' on it in Turkish)) Bayramın - ((laugh)) (Eid -)
51	Ayse	Sabah sabah almışsın eline ((laugh)) (You've started on it already, this early?)
52	Vedia	<b>No, no ((laugh)). Get in the line.</b>
53	Vedia	Duymadım Asmin, <b>say it again.</b> (I didn't hear you)
54	Asmin	Bayramın kutlu olsun.

(Happy Eid)		
55	Vedia	Çok bayramlar gör ablam. (May you live to see many more celebrations, my sister)
56	Ferda	((laugh)) Hani para vermedin. (You didn't give her money.)
57	Vedia	Kovid var yani bu bayram, para veremiyoruz. ((laugh)) (Because of Covid-19, we can't give money this Eid.)

In this excerpt, Asmin's interaction with her older sister, Vedia, reflects several aspects of child agency, as well as the social and cultural norms embedded in family interactions during a significant cultural event. In line 49 and 50, Asmin's immediate compliance with Vedia's request to kiss the latex glove reflects a form of agency where she engages with and accepts the playful, yet culturally significant, ritual. This demonstrates her understanding and participation in the family's cultural practices, despite the unusual circumstances brought on by the pandemic. In Line 53, Vedia's insistence that Asmin repeats her greeting highlights the importance placed on the correct use of language in family rituals, emphasising the value of preserving these linguistic norms. In Line 54 and 55, Asmin's use of the traditional greeting "Bayramın kutlu olsun" is an example of how linguistic norms are maintained and reinforced within the family setting. Vedia's response, "Çok bayramlar gör ablam," further emphasises the use of culturally appropriate language, reinforcing the importance of these expressions during Eid.

The interaction involves translanguaging between Turkish and English, as well as humour and traditional expressions. Asmin's ability to navigate between these linguistic resources shows her developing linguistic repertoire and how she adapts her language use to fit the cultural and situational context. In my post-production (as part of Scrapbooks project) interview with Asmin, she stated that [in English]:

#### Excerpt 4.12

“At [mainstream] school, I speak English and to all classmates because no one speak my language. Some of my teachers head of years can speak my language so we always speak Turkish. I go to Turkish school where you can only speak only one language, and you can’t speak English. At home, it is more flexible like in the video that I sent you.” (Online Interview, 14.05.2021).

In this excerpt, Asmin’s use of “MY language” is a significant discursive move that reveals her sense of belonging in relation to Turkish. This aligns with her mothers and her other utterances that emphasise “WE” and “OUR” when talking about her family and cultural practices. Her framing of Turkish as “my language” suggests a personal identification with it, not just as a functional tool of communication, but as a core part of her identity. By juxtaposing this ownership with the context of her mainstream school, where English dominates and “no one speaks my language,” Asmin highlights a boundary between her home and school environments -both linguistically and socially.

Asmin’s reflection also shows a keen awareness of how her language use shifts based on the social and spatial contexts she navigates daily. In her mainstream school, English is the dominant language of interaction with classmates. However, Turkish is preserved as a language of connection with certain teachers, marking a space where her heritage language holds value within an otherwise English-dominant environment. Asmin navigates and adjusts to the differing linguistic demands of her mainstream school and Turkish school, where monolingual Turkish is enforced. This demonstrates her bilingual flexibility and highlights how FLP within the educational context contrasts with the more flexible language practices at home. By describing the home environment as “more flexible,” Asmin highlights her negotiation between the monolingual policies in institutional settings and the multilingual reality multilingual reality she experiences within her family.

The fluidity in her home environment allows for the coexistence of both English and Turkish, which Asmin values. This indicates her active role in shaping language use within the family, particularly in how the home becomes a space where she can express her multilingual identity without the constraints found in school settings. Her choice to share the video, which encapsulates this flexibility, further underscores her agency in

communicating how her family practices contrast with more fixed institutional policies. Thus, the fluidity at home allows for the coexistence of Turkish and English, fostering a space where Asmin can practice both languages. This home environment, coupled with her awareness of the rules in formal settings, reflects how family language policy is not static but negotiated through lived experiences and interactions.

In Line 57, Vedia's humorous reference to Covid-19, using the phrase "Kovid var yani bu bayram, para veremiyoruz," reflects how new linguistic expressions related to the pandemic have entered the family's repertoire. Line 56 and 57 indicates that Ferda, the mother, also participates by highlighting the traditional expectation of giving money, thereby reinforcing her role as the elder who upholds family traditions. Vedia's humorous response acknowledges the tradition while adapting it to the current situation, reflecting the generational influence on maintaining or altering cultural practices.

In Asmin's Family, the interactions among generations illustrate a dynamic interplay of language practices and power relations, reflecting both flexibility and adherence to linguistic and cultural norms. Asmin and Beyza's lived experiences highlight the complexities of navigating multilingualism across different spaces, from the rigid monolingual expectations of school to the more fluid and accommodating environment at home. Through various interactions, such as the playful Eid celebration and their everyday exchanges, the children's agency emerges in their responses to both the overt and covert language policies shaped by other family members. Asmin's Family exemplifies the negotiation of language, culture, and generational roles within the evolving framework of their FLP.

## **Conclusion**

The family dynamics within Asmin's household clearly reflect the presence of compliance regimes, where children like Beyza align with established language norms and generational roles. Beyza, despite her bilingual competency, shows a preference for English in certain contexts, such as when she is painting, illustrating the flexible and situational nature of language choice within the family. In contrast, linguistic norms are reinforced through interactions that emphasize the use of polite language and culturally

appropriate expressions, a key element of maintaining family cohesion and cultural identity.

The family's linguistic repertoire is shaped by a blend of Cypriot Turkish, Standard Turkish, and English, with each language playing a distinct role in the family's communication practices. Asmin's navigation between different varieties of Turkish, including Cypriot Turkish at home and Standard Turkish in school and media, demonstrates her linguistic accommodation within the broader Turkish-speaking community. However, her attempts to expand Beyza's vocabulary highlight the influence of a child's immediate interests on their language development, with Beyza's disengagement signalling that language acquisition is not merely a matter of direct instruction but also a reflection of the child's personal inclinations and the context of interaction.

Generational positioning within the family is underscored by the roles of elders like Ferda, whose authority in language practices shapes the expectations placed on younger generations. Asmin's use of the inclusive "WE" when discussing language practices further emphasises the collective identity within the Turkish-Cypriot community, reinforcing the idea that language use within the family is not solely an individual matter but a collective, culturally defined practice. The interactions among generations highlight the complexities of multilingualism, with family members negotiating language use in ways that reflect both cultural heritage and the evolving nature of their linguistic identities.

In this context, children's agency emerges as they respond to the language policies shaped by family members, signalling the active role children play in the negotiation of family language practices. These responses reflect the broader framework of family language policy, showing that children not only conform to but also actively participate in shaping the language landscape of their family. Asmin and Beyza's language choices, while influenced by familial expectations, also illustrate the dynamic and evolving nature of multilingualism in the family context.

# Chapter 9 Conclusion

## 9.1. Main Findings

This thesis explores how children in Turkish-speaking families in the UK negotiate and enact their agency within family language ideologies, practices, and maintenance. The study's aim was to explore children's role as active agents in shaping Family Language Policy (FLP), focusing on how they navigate and transform their linguistic environments within intergenerational and multilingual family settings. Central to this investigation were three core research questions:

1. How do children negotiate their linguistic repertoires in their multilingual, intergenerational families?
2. In what ways do children's language ideologies and management efforts contribute to the transformation, maintenance, or adaptation of family language practices?
3. How do children influence and reshape family language policies through their everyday language practices and interactions?

Through ethnographic research conducted with four Turkish-speaking families, each situated within their unique sociocultural and intergenerational context, the study provides insightful data on how children actively shape their families' linguistic policies. These insights challenge traditional models of Family Language Policy (FLP), which often focus primarily on parental strategies and practices, by highlighting the dynamic role of children, as agents, play in negotiating and transforming language policies in multilingual family settings. Using child-centred methods, such as Language Portraits (LPs) tasks and interviews, and scrapbooks, this study foregrounds the importance of viewing children's agentive roles within their families' language ecology. Moreover, this research explores children's agency through language use, contributing to the growing field of FLP by aligning with Childhood Studies and highlighting the need to view children as active participants in family language negotiations.

Below, I address each of the research questions through the findings from the four multilingual, multigenerational Turkish-speaking families, while also connecting these

insights to the broader themes of child agency, language negotiation, and the maintenance of linguistic practices.

### **1. How do children negotiate their linguistic repertoires and enact agency in their multilingual, intergenerational families?**

Children negotiate their linguistic repertoires in their multilingual, intergenerational families by actively participating in language decisions and practices that shape the family's linguistic environment. Children's agency manifests in their language ideologies and practices through four intersecting, multi-layered dimensions: compliance regimes, linguistic repertoires, linguistic norms, and generational positioning.

Across all four families, the agency children enact was evident not only in their language choices but also in their ability to navigate between the expectations of different generations in their multilingual families.

In Emir's Family (Chapter 5), Emir, (9 years old) enacted his agency early on by enforcing an "English-only" code-of-interaction at home after facing language barriers at school. His non-compliance with his parents' and the grandmother's pro-Turkish FLP at this stage illustrates how children can resist family expectations in favour of societal norms, choosing English as their primary language for communication. Despite his parents' efforts to maintain Turkish at home, Emir's agency as resisting parental language policy of using Turkish led to a significant shift in family dynamics, influencing his younger twin sisters, Ela and Seda (6 years olds), to follow his lead in prioritising English as the language-of-interaction. The introduction of English by the children into the family's linguistic repertoire, along with their non-compliance with Turkish as the home language over time and across various contexts, illustrates how children's agency can shape and redefine family language practices. In this case, the children's preference for English -a majority language- subverted the traditional generational positioning, where older generations, typically seen as the authority in linguistic practices, would maintain control over language transmission. Instead, the children's dominant linguistic repertoire in English shifted the family's power dynamics, positioning the children as key agents off Emir's Family's shared linguistic repertoire. This positioning challenges the expected generational roles, where younger family members follow what their parents establish as

their FLP. Through their everyday practices, the children effectively negotiated and co-constructed the family's language ecology, making English the norm even in interactions with their grandmother who speaks only Turkish. Thus, my findings present a contrasting dynamic to the claim previously supported by other FLP studies (see Curdt-Christiansen & Sun, 2016; Savikj, 2018) which emphasise that parental ideology is a key factor in shaping how families establish their FLP because it is directly linked to the power and value assigned to their target language.

While Emir initially resisted Turkish due to his school environment, his re-engagement with the language through Turkish complementary school reflects how agency is negotiated in response to shifting contexts.

Children enact their agency through language ideologies and practices in their multilingual, intergenerational families by actively managing their communication based on the linguistic abilities of their interlocutors. In the case of Arin (Chapter 6), his switching to Turkish or Kurdish when his mother struggles to understand him illustrates how multilingual children draw from different parts of their linguistic repertoire to facilitate effective communication. This practice not only reflects Arin's adaptability but also indicates his active role in language management within the family. Being compliant with his mother's communicative choices, Arin switch between his languages available in his repertoire. His strategy to use Kurdish with his extended family members such as his aunts and uncles whereas socialising mainly in English with his Turkish and Kurdish-speaking cousins and sibling demonstrates his crucial role in the ongoing construction of the family's language practices and the establishment of linguistic norms.

Arin's adaptability to the linguistic capabilities of those with whom he communicates demonstrates how children are not merely passive recipients of family language policies; rather, they actively participate in shaping and expanding these policies based on situational needs (Purkarthofer, 2021; Smith-Christmas, 2020). By drawing on their multilingual resources, Arin constantly re-negotiates his communication strategies, ensuring that their linguistic interactions are meaningful and effective. Enforcing the use of compliant choice (Kurdish, Turkish and translanguaging practices) in Arin's interaction with older generations in his family (both nuclear and extended) also indicates that he reinforces the expected generational positioning.

Omer (10 years old) and Remzi (8 years old) in Chapter 7 also exercised agency by navigating between their grandparents' strict Turkish-only rule and their preference for English. Despite being compliant with their grandparents' insistence on speaking Turkish at home, these children frequently opted to use English in their interactions with one another, illustrating their ability to negotiate differing generational expectations. They balanced the Turkish-only FLP upheld by their grandparents and more flexible pro-Turkish FLP by their parents with the inter-sibling norm of English. Such enactment of their own language norms is typically interpreted as an agentive act (Smith-Christmas, 2022a). Additionally, the youngest child, Sevgi (5 years old), frequently asks her parents and grandparents, "How do you say this in Turkish?" This practice indicates that children in Omer's Family, even at a very early age, reinforce the language norms established by their parents and grandparents. Moreover, by doing so, they actively participate in the generational paradigm of transmitting the home language.

Through language, children in Omer's Family engage in cultural practices such as storytelling, singing, or participating in family rituals. These practices allow them to assert their agency by actively participating in their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of belonging within the family and community.

Similarly, in Asmin's Family (Chapter 8), Asmin (10 years old) demonstrated her agency by choosing when and with whom to use English and Turkish. While she adhered to her parents' preference for Turkish during parent-child interactions, she chose English when speaking with her siblings and peers. Asmin's Language Portrait revealed her internalised associations with each language: Turkish was mostly connected to familial warmth and emotional ties, while English was associated with cognitive and social engagement. This ability to switch between languages based on context reflects Asmin's nuanced navigation of her family's multilingual environment, where she actively aligns her language use with different social, generational and emotional expectations. For Beyza (5 years old), the use of Turkish is more strictly enforced by her grandmother, reflecting the family's language policy. While she complies with the Turkish family language policy (FLP) during interactions with her grandmother, she demonstrates resistance in engaging with Asmin's language modelling for Turkish. This behaviour indicates Beyza's reflexive and relational agency, as she navigates her linguistic choices based on context.

Across all four families, children enacted their agency by making strategic language choices that aligned with their personal, social, and cultural needs. Their decisions were not solely dictated by parental or societal expectations but were the result of negotiations based on their lived experiences.

## **2. In what ways do children's language ideologies and management efforts contribute to the transformation, maintenance, or adaptation of family language practices?**

Children in all four families played a critical role in changing, maintaining, or transforming the family's language policies through their interactions with parents, siblings, grandparents and extended family members. These changes were not one-sided; they were part of a dynamic negotiation that took into account the desires of the parents and the agency of the children.

In Emir's Family, Emir's introduction of an English-only rule not only transformed his own language practices but also those of his siblings and parents. His decision to prioritise English at home led to a shift in the family's language ecology, with English becoming the dominant language in sibling interactions. For instance, he took control of the TV to watch only English contents and asked his parents to speak English with him. Despite his effort to a shift from Turkish to English in the medium-of-interaction, his parents, Ali and Yeliz, continued to use Turkish with the children, illustrating a negotiation between Emir's preference for English and the parents' desire to maintain the heritage language. The family's language policy, therefore, became a hybrid of English and Turkish, shaped by Emir's early resistance to Turkish and his later re-engagement with the language through Turkish complementary school.

By engaging in Turkish while occasionally slipping back into English in their interactions with their father, the twin girls, Ela and Seda, demonstrate partial compliance, reflecting their ability to navigate between languages based on situational context and their linguistic preferences.

Emir's introducing a non-human agent due to communication gap between his grandmother and him brings another layer to this families' language policy. The use of Google Translate illustrates how technological mediation can facilitate communication

between generations in this family, significantly changing the dynamics of their interactions.

Arin's Family presented a slightly different pattern, where Arin's preference for English with his peers and sibling did not challenge familial language use which help to maintain the home languages within generations in this family. The data illustrated in Chapter 6 indicates that Bahar, the mother, maintained Kurdish and Turkish as the primary languages of communication without explicitly and strictly setting those languages as the medium-of-interaction. Both Evin and Arin complied with this home language policy in their language use with caregivers and maintained in their daily lives in a highly Turkish and Kurdish-speaking communities surrounding them. On the other hand, Arin's use of digital gaming platforms, where he comfortably and creatively uses his full linguistic repertoire, demonstrates how he has created his own environment for practicing and sustaining his languages. Arin's practice aligns with Fogle's (2012) work on the agency of Russian adoptee children, and Smith-Christmas's (2021) study with Irish-English bilingual children, as both actively create their own context for language learning and use. This demonstrates how children can subtly evolve family language policies through their everyday language practices, even when these changes are not explicitly sanctioned by the parents. These findings advocate for more flexible and inclusive approaches to supporting multilingualism, where children's voices and agency are recognised as central to shaping language policies.

In Omer's Family, Omer and Remzi transformed their grandparents' strict Turkish-only policy by speaking English to each other when their grandparents were not directly involved in the conversation. While they adapted their language practices to the prevalent monolingual standard set by their grandparents, they interpreted it more flexibly according to their communicative needs. This resistance to the strict language rules created a parallel language environment, where English became the dominant language for sibling interactions, while Turkish was reserved for conversations with older family members. This demonstrates how children's agency can challenge monolingual ideologies, as they negotiate and adjust language use in ways that fit their everyday communication preferences while still respecting the broader family expectations. (Knoll & Becker, 2023). Additionally, Omer's multilingual hip-hop music likening and regular video-calls with extended family members in Cyprus illustrates that the child finds his

own space and context for practicing his linguistic repertoire within and across the generations.

In Asmin's Family, Asmin helps maintain the family's Turkish FLP by using Turkish in interactions with her parents and grandparents. Despite the dominant presence of English in her daily life outside the home, Asmin consistently engages in Turkish when communicating with older generations, especially her mother, who primarily speaks Turkish. This use of Turkish shows her respect for family expectations and her role in preserving the heritage language, aligning her practices with her parents' desire to keep Turkish alive within the family.

While Asmin maintains Turkish in intergenerational interactions, she frequently switches to English when speaking with her siblings or peers. This flexibility reflects how Asmin transforms the family's language practices by creating an environment where English coexists alongside Turkish. By using English in sibling and peer interactions, she contributes to the evolution of the family's language policy to accommodate the children's everyday linguistic needs and preferences. Asmin's use of Turkish in particular contexts, such as cultural or family events, reflects her understanding of the emotional and cultural significance tied to the heritage language. She uses Turkish to maintain a sense of connection to her cultural roots, particularly in moments that carry symbolic weight for the family. This selective engagement in Turkish shows that children do not simply resist or comply with language policies but actively shape and transform these policies based on the meanings they attach to the languages they use.

### **3. How do children influence and reshape family language policies through their everyday language practices and interactions?**

Children's agency manifested in various forms, contributing to the family's language ecology and policies in multifaceted ways. These manifestations included not only their language choices but also their use of technology, interactions with siblings, and participation in cultural practices.

One prominent form of agency was the use of technology as a tool for navigating multilingual family contexts. In Emir's Family, Emir used Google Translate to communicate with his Turkish-speaking grandmother, illustrating how children control

digital tools to bridge language gaps between generations. Arin, for instance, used online video gaming and streaming platforms to leverage his multilingual identity, gaining more reactions from his followers. In Omer's Family, Omer and Remzi used FaceTime to maintain their connections with Turkish-speaking relatives in Cyprus. Asmin, on the other hand, was exposed to Turkish soap operas through her mother's frequent viewing of them on YouTube. These examples show how children use technology to manage language interactions and contribute to the family's language ecology by incorporating new forms of communication that extend beyond traditional face-to-face conversations (Lexander & Androutsopoulos, 2023).

Another form children contributed to their families' language ecology, policies, and practices is music, particularly playing the saz. Playing saz, a traditional Turkish stringed musical instrument, helps children manifest agency.

In Emir's Family, for example, Emir's playing of saz along with singing a traditional Turkish music, ties him to the cultural and linguistic heritage of his family. By engaging with this music, whether through playing, singing, or simply listening to Turkish-language songs, Emir actively reinforces the language's presence in his everyday life, even though he decided to only speak in English. Children may use their involvement with Turkish music as a way to meet generational expectations while also asserting their personal preferences. For instance, while parents or grandparents might emphasise the importance of Turkish music and language, children, through playing the saz or engaging with Turkish songs, can meet these expectations but on their own terms. By engaging with traditional Turkish music, children introduce and maintain Turkish in informal, family-oriented settings, expanding the domains in which the language is used. Through these musical activities, children effectively broaden the scope of the family's language ecology, ensuring that the home language has a place beyond formal instruction or conversations, embedding it in cultural expression. Fernández-Toro (2019) explains this concept as *musilingual* practices, which refers to activities that involve engaging with music and one or more languages in productive, receptive, or mediating ways.

Children's participation in cultural practices also contributed to the family's multilingual language maintenance. For example, in Asmin's Family, Asmin's involvement in Turkish folkdance performances at her complementary school reinforced her use of Turkish and

strengthened her connection to her cultural heritage. Similarly, in Omer's Family, the grandparents' storytelling and participation in Turkish cultural celebrations helped maintain Turkish as an integral part of the family's language practices, fostering a strong sense of linguistic and cultural identities. In Arin's Family, the dengbêji -Kurdish storytelling through song- performed by Arin's aunt helped connect Arin to his ethnic identity.

Sibling interactions were another key area where children's agency manifested. In Emir's Family, Emir's influence on his twin sisters transformed the siblings' language practices, with all three children primarily speaking English to each other. Similarly, Asmin's preference for English shaped her interactions with her niece, Beyza, even though Turkish was the preferred language for parent-child conversations. In Arin's Family, Arin's use of English with Evin reinforced the role of siblings in creating a distinct language environment within the family, separate from the parents' expectations.

Across all families, children's agency contributed to the broader language ecology by introducing new linguistic resources, such as digital tools and peer interactions, and by maintaining connections to their cultural heritage through participation in community and cultural activities.

The findings from this study reveal that children in Turkish-speaking families in the UK negotiate and enact their agency in complex and nuanced ways. Rather than simply complying with or rejecting family language policies, children actively participate in shaping these policies through their everyday language practices. Their agency is multi-faceted, encompassing not only language choices but also their use of digital tools, interactions with siblings, and participation in cultural activities.

## **9.2. Theoretical and Methodological Contributions**

This study makes significant theoretical and methodological contributions to the fields of Family Language Policy (FLP) and childhood studies, particularly in multilingual contexts involving Turkish-speaking families in the UK. Childhood studies have been criticised for treating child agency narrowly as either 'resistance or resourcefulness' (Abebe, 2019), while FLP studies have faced critique for relegating child agency to the periphery of the field until recently (Smith-Christmas, 2021). Addressing the lack of

conceptual clarity around child agency, Smith-Christmas (2020, 2021) offered a model to conceptualise child agency within FLP, bridging the shared interest between childhood studies and FLP in the relational nature of child–caregiver interactions. Building on her work, my study advances this exploration by modifying her model to foreground the role of linguistic repertoire. By integrating a multidimensional framework—compliance regimes, linguistic norms, linguistic repertoire, and generational positioning—this research extends the theorisation of child agency in FLP. By doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of child agency within FLP, specifically in the context of children from Turkish-speaking families in the UK. I introduce a fresh perspective on how children navigate, influence, and actively participate in family language negotiations. The child-centred approach to FLP is relatively new, as most prior studies have focused predominantly on the role of parents, overlooking children’s active participation in shaping family language practices. My work emphasises the importance of understanding children not just as passive recipients of language policies but as active agents who negotiate, resist, and contribute to family language use in complex and dynamic ways. Building on sociolinguistic theories of superdiversity (Blommaert & Backus, 2013), I also highlight how linguistic repertoires are not merely linguistic but deeply embodied and emotional, shaped by individual and collective lived experiences. This contributes to a growing body of work emphasising the embodied dimensions of language use (Busch, 2017).

Theoretically, the most significant contribution lies in the intersection of childhood studies and FLP. Bringing these two fields together highlights the often-overlooked perspective of children as agents of change in their family language policies. This is particularly valuable in multicultural and multilingual contexts, where children’s language choices can diverge from the established family norms. My study, thus, contributes to the growing body of work on child agency, emphasising the unique linguistic experiences of children from Turkish-speaking families living in the UK.

This thesis makes a substantial contribution to the field of family multilingualism by shifting the analytical focus from parent-driven language policies to child-led linguistic practices, revealing how multilingual family life is co-constructed across generations. A key theoretical contribution is the application of post-structuralist and sociocultural perspectives on multilingualism, treating linguistic repertoires as fluid, dynamic, and

socially negotiated rather than as static, bounded systems. By drawing on linguistic repertoires (Blommaert, 2010; Busch 2012, 2021) and, generational ordering (Alanen, 2009) this thesis challenges dominant assumptions about the unidirectional nature of language transmission and instead conceptualises FLP as an evolving, dialogic process.

Furthermore, this research highlights the embodied and affective dimensions of family multilingualism, showing that multilingual experiences are not merely cognitive or ideological but also deeply tied to bodily orientations, emotions, and sensory perceptions. Through LP analysis, this study demonstrates that children's use of body metaphors, spatial positioning, and colour symbolism provides crucial insights into their lived experiences of multilingualism, offering a more comprehensive and embodied understanding of how linguistic repertoires are felt, embodied, and enacted within families.

Moreover, this study highlights the importance of extended family networks, particularly grandparent-grandchild interactions, in shaping children's multilingual practices. The findings show that children's engagement with their grandparents plays a crucial role in home language maintenance and intergenerational transmission, as seen in the family interactions analysed in this study. Grandparents not only influence linguistic continuity but also contribute to children's emotional socialisation and future language ideologies, reinforcing their role in shaping language beliefs across generations (Said, 2024). Children navigate and reinforce their multilingualism not only through direct family conversations but also in creative ways beyond the household, such as engaging in digital spaces and cultural practices. Examples include Arin's Twitch streaming in multiple languages, Omer's engagement with multilingual hip-hop and rap music, and Emir's connection to multilingual repertoire through playing the saz. These cases illustrate how children integrate their linguistic repertoires into various domains of their lives, extending FLP beyond the home and into wider social, digital, and cultural spheres.

In addition to the theoretical contributions, my study offers important methodological advancements. By adopting a child-centred research approach, I emphasise the importance of engaging children directly in conversations about their own multilingualism. This approach acknowledges children as capable of reflecting on and articulating their language use, thus placing them at the centre of the research process.

The use of tools such as Language Portraits (LP) provided an innovative and accessible way for children to express their linguistic repertoires. Through these visual and metaphorical representations, children were able to reflect on their language practices in ways that traditional interview methods may not have captured. The LP method not only made the research more engaging for children but also enabled a more nuanced exploration of how they experience and conceptualise their linguistic repertoires.

Moreover, my methodological contribution extends to the practicalities of data collection during a global pandemic. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, much of the data had to be collected remotely. This presented challenges but also led to valuable innovations in how ethnographic research can be conducted in a remote setting. I adapted my data collection methods to include virtual visits, which allowed me to continue gathering rich, qualitative data from the families despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic. This adaptation has broader implications for conducting ethnographic research in challenging circumstances, demonstrating that it is possible to collect meaningful data in virtual environments while maintaining the depth and engagement of traditional, face-to-face fieldwork.

In sum, this study contributes both theoretically and methodologically to the fields of FLP and childhood studies. By foregrounding children's agency and experiences within their families' language practices, my research offers new insights into the ways in which children interact with, negotiate, and shape the linguistic environments of their homes. Methodologically, the use of child-centred tools and the remote data collection methods necessitated by the pandemic demonstrate the adaptability and potential of innovative research strategies for studying language use in family contexts, even in times of crisis.

### **9.3. Limitations of the Study**

While this study offers valuable insights into family language policies (FLP) and children's agency within multilingual settings, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample size is relatively small, as the ethnographic nature of the research focused on a few families in detail. Although this allowed for an in-depth analysis of each family's unique linguistic practices, it limits the generalisability of the findings. The study may not fully capture the broader range of experiences and family

dynamics in other contexts or regions, particularly in multilingual families with different socioeconomic, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds.

Second, the longitudinal nature of the research, which involved both face-to-face and online visits, was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift from in-person to virtual data collection methods, while necessary, may have influenced the dynamics of family interactions, particularly in terms of how natural the conversations and behaviours were during online observations. The pandemic also delayed some planned visits, which may have restricted the richness of the data compared to the originally intended research design.

Additionally, while the reliance on self-reported data from parents and children poses certain limitations, the inclusion of house visits and video recordings provided me a more comprehensive understanding of family language practices. While interviews and Language Portrait tasks provided key insights into their perspectives, there is always the possibility of selective reporting or biases, as participants may have responded in ways they believed were expected or acceptable. Moreover, young children's ability to articulate their language experiences and agency might be constrained by their cognitive and linguistic development, potentially affecting the depth of their responses.

The use of Language Portraits (LP) as one of the data collection tools, though innovative and child-friendly, also presents challenges. The method's reliance on metaphorical and visual representation might have led to varying interpretations by participants, especially in how they positioned languages in relation to their bodies. Interpreting these metaphorical associations required significant subjectivity on the part of the researcher, which may have influenced the analysis.

Finally, the post-structuralist approach to analysing language as fluid repertoires, rather than fixed systems, brings its own challenges. While this perspective offers flexibility, it can make it difficult to establish clear, concrete conclusions, as language practices are constantly evolving and influenced by numerous external factors.

## **9.4. Directions for Future Research**

This study has contributed to the field of Family Language Policy by bringing together childhood studies and the concept of child agency in the context of Turkish-speaking

families in the UK. However, there are several areas that require further exploration to deepen our understanding of multilingual family dynamics.

One promising area for future research is the examination of child agency in sibling interactions. While my study highlights the ways children influence family language practices, especially through their agency in language maintenance and shifts, sibling dynamics require more focused attention. Prior research (e.g., Kheirkhah & Cekaite, 2018) suggests that siblings play a critical role in shaping each other's language use. Expanding on this, future studies could explore how sibling relationships mediate and negotiate language ideologies and practices, providing a more comprehensive view of agency within the family.

Additionally, the ongoing development of digital platforms has transformed how multilingual families communicate. My study involved data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasising the increasing relevance of digital spaces in family interactions. Future research should investigate the effects of mediated communication on FLP, particularly in transnational families, where online platforms are used to maintain linguistic ties across borders. As Said (2021) indicates, investigating both non-mediated and mediated communication is essential for understanding contemporary digital multilingual families. This will require innovative methods that capture family interactions across various media, an area that has grown in significance post-pandemic and will likely continue to expand.

Furthermore, methodological innovations such as the Language Portraits (LP) and Scrapbooks, which I employed to elicit children's reflections on their multilingualism, present further opportunities for research. As Busch (2012) noted, LPs successfully uncover emotional and ideological dimensions of language use. Future studies could build on this by incorporating LPs into more narrative-based research, where family members' personal stories about language are collected and analysed to explore deeper insights into language ideologies and agency negotiation. Future research could explore the impact of diverse family structures, moving beyond traditional notions of the nuclear family to investigate configurations such as adoptive families, families living with co-located grandparents, single-parent families and LGBT families in various sociocultural contexts.

By recognising children's agentive role in shaping FLP, this study suggests that language policy interventions should move beyond solely targeting parents and instead consider child-centered strategies that empower children as active participants in family multilingualism.

Finally, addressing issues of power, race, and class within multilingual families is crucial. The pandemic has highlighted inequalities that affect language practices, and future research should adopt more critical approaches to examine how these factors influence family language policies, following Lanza and Gomes (2020) and Gomes (2018). A decolonial approach to FLP could provide important theoretical advancements by critically examining how historical and structural power dynamics—such as colonialism, racism, and class inequalities—shape language use and value within multilingual families. This perspective focuses on how certain languages are marginalized or devalued due to their association with oppressed groups, while dominant languages gain prestige and power. By addressing these social categorisations and power hierarchies, a decolonial approach could help reframe FLP, promoting more equitable language practices and policies that challenge existing inequalities and elevate historically marginalised languages.



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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Consent form and information sheet for children to participate in research

**Goldsmiths**  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

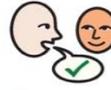
# A chance to be involved



**Do you agree to take part in the following activities?**  
(Please tick ✓ the box if you wish to join.)

I agree to;

   [audio and/or video] record my interactions with family members at home.

  participate in individual or joint family discussions.

   share my drawings, photographs, texts, notes related to my use of different languages.

   Remember that it is your choice to participate.

**Name:**  
**Age:**  
**Signature:**



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### What is this study about?



In this study, I would like to learn about your interactions with other family members in the language(s) of your choice. This can be your conversations with your parents, siblings, cousins and grandparents in your daily communication.



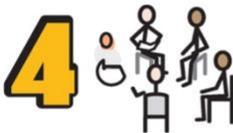
### Why it is important?

Your decisions on which language(s) to use and your language choices when you socialise with other family members can help me (as researcher) to better understand how you use your different languages as a bilingual child growing up in London.



### What Information will I collect?

I would like to observe or ask you to record for me some of your conversations with your parents, siblings, and other family members. For instance, if you invite your cousins to your home to play a video-game or if you do your homework with your mother. I would also like to have chat with you and your family about the different languages you use at home and collect any drawings, texts or notes you write that might be related to your different languages.



### How will I collect the information?

You can help this research by making audio or video recordings while you interact with your family members whenever you want and collect photographs and other materials related to the different languages you use at home.



### What if you change your mind?

You can choose to participate or not in this study at any time. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

Thank you for your help!

## Appendix B: Consent form and information sheet for Parent/Guardians



### PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

**Title of the Project: Children's Agency in Family Language Policy: Turkish-speaking families in the UK**

Researcher: Busra Akgun-Ezin

If you are happy for you and your child/children to take part in the study, please fill in the form below and return it to the researcher as soon as possible.

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher Busra Akgun-Ezin at 07576105955 or send an email to [bakgu001@gold.ac.uk](mailto:bakgu001@gold.ac.uk) for any questions. This study has been reviewed and approved by my doctoral supervisor, Dr Vally Lytra, Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

**Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet dated xx for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these questions answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my and my child's/children's participation is/are voluntary and that we are free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty.
3. I understand that the identifiable data provided will be securely stored and accessible by the researcher only and that confidentiality will be maintained.
4. I understand that data collected in this project might be shared as appropriate and for publication of findings, in which case data will remain completely anonymous.
5. I agree to take part in the study.
6. I agree to be audio and/or video recorded.
7. I agree for my child/children to take part in the study.
8. I agree for my child/children to be audio and/or video recorded.








Participant Name

Date

Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

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Researcher Name

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Date

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Researcher Signature



## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS**

**Study title: Children’s Agency in Family Language Policy: Turkish-speaking families in the UK**

### **What is the purpose of this study?**

This study aims to bring about a greater understanding of Turkish-speaking children’s language use and identity development in Turkish-speaking families in London. Currently little is known about how children make decisions about and negotiate language use in the home environment with their family members (parents, siblings, cousins, grandparents etc) in Turkish-speaking families, and how these children construct their active roles and identities.

### **Why have I been invited?**

You have been invited to participate in this study because:

- a) You have a mainland Turkish or Turkish Cypriot background, and/or
- b) Your children have attended one of the Turkish complementary schools or have taken private lessons in London, which shows your deliberate effort to maintain the Turkish language and identity.

There will be five families in total recruited for this study.

### **Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide to join the study. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason. However, please note that anonymised data cannot be removed from the study after June 30, 2020.

### **What will happen if I take part, and what will I have to do?**

Involvement in this study will be over a period of 9 months, from 1 October 2019 – 30 June 2020, during which time I will visit your home and spend time at your home observing your children in their everyday activities.

During the study you will be asked to:

- Allow the researcher to visit your home at mutually agreed upon times to observe your children, their interactions with you and other family members,
- Allow the researcher to collect photographs and other documentary data (such as your children's drawings, writings, notes) during the visits,
- Allow your child/children to audio or video record their interactions with family members at home. The audio or video recorded interactions will be transcribed for analysis.
- Participate in informal discussions and interviews with the researcher. Interviews will last approximately 1 hour and will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The researcher will be in regular telephone contact with you in order to discuss any issues and to arrange times and days to visit.

All of the data collected with you and your children will be anonymised. They will be stored securely in a password protected laptop. All personal information will be kept confidential. Any names or identifying features will be removed from the data collected before they are made public.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Through this study, you will have the opportunity to share your thoughts, beliefs and feelings about language use in your family. Additionally, the study will help to make the Turkish-speaking communities more visible in mainstream society in England. Also, the results of this study will inform researchers, educators and policymakers working with Turkish-speaking communities abroad.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of this study will form the basis for my PhD study. Additionally, they will be published in academic publications and presented at national and international conferences. A summary of the research findings will be given to all research participations once the study and analysis have been completed.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research forms the basis of a PhD project by Busra Akgun-Ezin, at the Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London. The study has been funded by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has received ethics clearance from my dissertation supervisor, Dr Vally Lytra.

**Where can I find out further information?**

For any further information, please contact the researcher: Busra Akgun-Ezin, Goldsmiths, University of London, +44 7576 105955 <bakgu001@gold.ac.uk>. If you have any concerns about your participation or about the project in general, you should contact Dr Vally Lytra on +41 (0) 79903 5253 or <v.lytra@gold.ac.uk>.

*Thank you for considering participating in the study.*

**Appendix C: Research Ethics Form****Data Protection Privacy Notice****The General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR] and Goldsmiths Research: guidelines for participants**

Please note that this document does not constitute, and should not be construed as, legal advice. These guidelines are designed to help participants understand their rights under GDPR which came into force on 25 May 2018.

**Your rights as a participant (data subject) in this study**

The updated data protection regulation is a series of conditions designed to protect an individual's personal data. Not all data collected for research is personal data.

Personal data is data such that a living individual can be identified; collection of personal data is sometimes essential in conducting research and GDPR sets out that data subjects should be treated in a lawful and fair manner and that information about the data processing should be explained clearly and transparently. Some data we might ask to collect falls under the heading of **special categories data**. This type of information includes data about an individual's race; ethnic origin; politics; religion; trade union membership; genetics; biometrics (where used for ID purposes); health; sex life; or sexual orientation. This data requires particular care.

Under GDPR you have the following rights over your personal data<sup>12</sup>:

- ***The right to be informed.*** You must be informed if your personal data is being used.
- ***The right of access.*** You can ask for a copy of your data by making a 'subject access request'.
- ***The right to rectification.*** You can ask for your data held to be corrected.
- ***The right to erasure.*** You can ask for your data to be deleted.
- ***The right to restrict processing.*** You can limit the way an organisation uses your personal data if you are concerned about the accuracy of the data or how it is being used.
- ***The right to data portability.*** You have the right to get your personal data from an organisation in a way that is accessible and machine-readable. You also have the right to ask an organisation to transfer your data to another organisation.
- ***The right to object.*** You have the right to object to the use of your personal data in some circumstances. You have an absolute right to object to an organisation using your data for direct marketing.
- ***How your data is processed using automated decision making and profiling.*** You have the right not to be subject to a decision that is based solely on automated processing if the decision affects your legal rights or other equally important matters; to understand the reasons behind decisions made about you by automated processing and the possible consequences of the decisions, and to object to profiling in certain situations, including for direct marketing purposes.

Please note that these rights are not absolute and only apply in certain circumstances. You should also be informed how long your data will be retained and who it might be shared with.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/>

## **How does Goldsmiths treat my contribution to this study?**

Your participation in this research is very valuable and any personal data you provide will be treated in confidence using the best technical means available to us. The university's legal basis for processing your data<sup>13</sup> as part of our research findings is a "task carried out in the public interest". This means that our research is designed to improve the health, happiness and well-being of society and to help us better understand the world we live in. It is not going to be used for marketing or commercial purposes.

In addition to our legal basis under Article 6 (as described above), for **special categories data** as defined under Article 9 of GDPR, our condition for processing is that it is "necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes"<sup>14</sup>.

If your data contributes to data from a group then your ability to remove data may be limited as the project progresses, when removal of your data may cause damage to the dataset.

**You should also know that you may contact any of the following people if you are unhappy about the way your data or your participation in this study are being treated:**

- Goldsmiths Data Protection Officer – [dp@gold.ac.uk](mailto:dp@gold.ac.uk) (concerning your rights to control personal data).
- Chair, Goldsmiths Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee - via [reisc@gold.ac.uk](mailto:reisc@gold.ac.uk), REISC Secretary (for any other element of the study).
- You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

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<sup>13</sup> GDPR Article 6; the six lawful bases for processing data are explained here: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/>

<sup>14</sup> Article 9 of the GDPR requires this type of data to be treated with great care because of the more significant risks to a person's fundamental rights and freedoms that mishandling might cause, eg, by putting them at risk of unlawful discrimination.

*This information has been provided by the Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee with advice from the Research Services and Governance and Legal Teams. Version: 13 August 2018*

## **Appendix D: Semi-structured interview protocol with parents and grandparents**

The questions listed below are sample questions that were part of the semi-structured interview protocol used during my research. These questions were designed to be flexible, with the wording and sequence adjusted based on the flow of the conversation. Additional sub-questions were posed when further clarification or elaboration was necessary.

### 1. Background Information

- Can you tell me a little about yourself?
- How old are you, and what is your occupation?
- Where were you born, and how long have you been living in England?

### 2. Language Use Within the Family

- What languages do you speak at home with your children? With your spouse? With extended family members?
- How did you come to decide which language(s) to speak with your children?

### 3. Parental Role in Language Learning

- In what ways do you feel you have contributed to your child's English and heritage/home language learning?
- Can you describe any specific strategies or activities you use to help your child learn and practice both English and your heritage/home language?

### 4. Children's Language Attitudes

- How would you describe your child's attitude toward speaking English and the heritage /home language?

- Have you noticed any changes in their attitudes over time? If so, what do you think influenced these changes?

#### 5. Connection with Extended Family and Cultural Ties

- How frequently do you interact with extended family members, either in person or through digital communication?

- How often do you visit your home country, and what impact do these visits have on your family's language practices?

#### 6. School and Language Learning Support

- Do you believe your child's school acknowledges and values your child's ability to speak languages other than English?

- What opportunities, if any, have you observed within the school environment that encourage your child to use and share their other languages or cultural background?

#### 7. Advice and Support for Language Development

- Has anyone—such as teachers, friends, or other family members—given you advice on your child's language learning and development? If so, what was the advice?

- Are there any resources or support systems available to you for fostering your child's development in both English and the heritage/home language(s)?

#### 8. Turkish Complementary School Attendance

- Does your child attend Turkish complementary school? If so, what motivated that decision?

#### 9. Importance of Multilingualism

- How important do you believe it is for your child to be raised in heritage/home language and English? Why do you feel this way?

- How do you envision this bilingualism contributing to your child's future?

#### 10. Language Support at Home

- What kinds of support, if any, are available in your home for the development of both the heritage/home language and English?

- Do you feel that your family dynamics or daily routines support balanced language use, or do you prioritise one language over the other? Why?

## **Appendix E: Sample of fieldnotes**

### **Omer's Family, 2nd Visit**

24 November 2019

18:00

It was a rainy day which means I had to go off a bit earlier regarding the disruption of transportation on my way to Omer's house. I was rushing along with the questions in my mind that I am going to ask during the parental interview and checking my final notes on the interview questions quickly. I was a bit excited than usual because there would be the grandparents besides the parents whom I conduct the interview with. Since Selen and I talked earlier on the phone about the content of this visit, the grandparents, and the father were waiting for me in the living room while Selen was welcoming me to inside. I could hear Omer and Remzi chatting and watching TV in the other room. They greeted me with a friendly "Hoşgeldiniz!" (Welcome!) at the door of this room and went back watching TV (Nickelodeon -in English- channel was broadcasting at the moment). I just remembered what the children told me about their TV habits in my first visit. Both Remzi and Omer stated in our interviews that the family watches the Turkish TV channels if the grandparents and the parents were in the room, whereas the children prefer to watch the English broadcasts if the adults are not around. Seeing the children were doing exactly what they said they do was invaluable. Then, I entered the living room and set opposite to Sevgi (the grandmother) after greeting each of them. Emin (the grandfather) and Mehmet (the father) were sitting on the chairs between Sevgi and me.

Sevgi has short, light brown hair, in her late 60-ies, dressed lilac knitted cardigan vest. It reminded me of my own grandmothers as this knitted vest is a must for many grandmothers in Turkey, too. Emin Bey, is in his early 70-ies, tall and wearing a shirt with blue-white checked lining, looking like a typical Mediterranean old man with glasses, grey hair and olive-skin. Both of them seemed eager to share their experiences as grandparents. Mehmet Bey, on the other hand, is in his late 30-ies, a tall and athletic man, wearing a black t-shirt and jeans, has a goatee beard and a tribal tattoo on his arms. He

was quite silent during the interview, mostly showing agreement what the grandparents said by nodding and left the room after answering a few questions since his oldest son (Omer) called him over from the other room.

Before we began the interview, Sevgi (4 y-o girl) came in with a beanie doll tucked under her arm and set down just near to her grandmother on the floor. She was shy while I was trying to talk to her, teasing her about the doll. As the youngest member living in this house, I could see that she was in the centre of attention by everyone in the family. Almost all my conversations with the family members would be in Turkish during this visit because I knew from my first visit that the family aim to set up the ‘Turkish-only’ rule for the children. After a small chat with this little girl, I turned the audio recording on and started by asking the grandparents some questions about their history of immigration to the UK.

Sevgi Hanım came to England 52 years ago when she was 14 y-o girl and married to Emin Bey, who migrated to the UK by this marriage, three years later. They have six children and nine grandchildren who have been looked after by Sevgi Hanım until they started the mainstream schools. At this moment, Sevgi Hanım took a deep breath, glanced around the room as if she remembers all the memories and said that they have been living in this house for about 35 years. All of Sevgi Hanım’s children married to someone from Cypriot-Turkish community in England.

Then, we talked about what kind of strategies they used in terms of maintaining Turkish with their children and grandchildren. Both the grandmother and grandfather believed that children would forget home language quickly if there is no discipline and certain rules about it. Therefore, the continuity of home language depends heavily on the parents rather than the children. And, Sevgi Hanım added: “It, in fact, depends mainly on the mothers.”

I was trying to lead the conversation and asking more about how genders are playing a role in this ‘discipline’ of the children in their family. However, it was quite hard to interrupt them since Sevgi Hanım and Emin Bey were talking enthusiastically one after another which caused a discursive discussion. Also, interrupting the elders’ conversation is not held with the social norms in Turkish culture. Therefore, I took notes

about the question I would like to ask the grandparents, with an expectation of asking them later. Meanwhile, the younger boy (Remzi) came in and talked to his mother in English about the pendant he was wearing. I noticed that Selen Hanım replied to him in English as she indicated earlier that she wants to use only Turkish at home but sometimes she finds herself speaking in English automatically.

Selen Hanım had started to attend the NLTS when she was 5 y-o. Since then, she has been an active member of the Turkish-speaking community of this school. At this point, Sevgi Hanım interfered in and said that all of her children attended the NLTS except the first child as the school had not been opened yet. However, Sevgi Hanım taught her to write in Turkish when this girl was 5 years old. And the grandfather followed: "People hardly distinguished my children's accent from the local people when we go to Cyprus for holidays. They surprised how my children as British-born Cypriot Turks can speak as the same way as they speak". The grandparents were very proud of transmitting the home language to their children, and now to the grandchildren.

While we were talking about how their home language learning affects the children's multicultural identity, the grandmother asked Sevgi: "Who is the most important person?" (En büyük kim?). Her granddaughter replied vivaciously: "Atatürk!". "Well done my daughter!" (Aferin be gızıma be!) Sevgi Hanım beamed.

A few minutes later, the door was knocked where Sevgi Hanım's the oldest child Emine Hanım, her husband and two children came in out of blue. I immediately recognised Emine Hanım's daughter Huriye (16 y-o girl) from the NLTS since she helps out the school activities occasionally. The room was crowded with the grandparents, Selen Hanım's family and Emine Hanım's family for a short moment. Then, the men left just after greeting me and went to the other room. I continued with the grandmother, Selen Hanım, Emine Hanım and her two children. Although I was thinking it is a great opportunity to have many family members in the same place, I missed the fact that it is highly demanding to control and lead the conversation. Also, the voices often overlapped during the interview which led me to miss some part of the recordings out.

While we were talking about the cultural clash in multicultural families, Remzi entered the room. "Is there any Turkish custom your children particularly enjoy?" I asked

Selen Hanım. “For instance, do they know the hand-kissing tradition<sup>15</sup> ?” I continued. She noticed Ramadan just entered the room and ask him this question. Remzi nodded, replied “Yes.” “Why we do this hand-kissing?” she asked. Remzi answered with a puckish smile on his face “Money!” (he indicates the tradition that the elderlies give money -or sometimes candy- to children as a return of hand-kissing) and managed to make us all laugh. On the other hand, Selen Hanım and Emine Hanım drew our attention to another point that the culture of their family has been shaped by the dominant culture of Britain in time. Selen Hanım explained this with an example: “When I was a child, we wouldn’t celebrate New Year or have a Christmas tree because my parents were not willing to do so. However, these are playing important roles in our life now”.

Sevgi Hanım brought an important subject up during the interview which I was aiming to ask about. She mentioned a coach trip she attended with a group of Cypriot Turks to the eastern part of Turkey last summer. While they were heading off to a tourist attraction, the coach was stopped for a regular security check (it’s the procedure that the policeman checks the passenger’s ID if there is an outlaw travelling). After finishing his control, the policeman told the passengers: “*Hepsi Kıbrıslı, Türk yok mu?*” (They are all Cypriots. No Turkish here?) and everyone on the bus shouted at him “We are Turkish!”. Even though she understood the aim of the policeman was not discriminating them, but implying that ‘they are Turkish Cypriots’, she found the policeman’s utterance rather hurtful and unpleasant.

Apart from language use, culture and identity of the family, there were remarkable literacy practices this family shared with me. According to Selen Hanım’s account, they find reading bedtime stories very helpful regarding the children’s language development in both languages. The grandmother and Selen Hanım used to read the boys every night until the children turned five years old and have been reading to the little girl. If it is her grandmother's turn to read, Sevgi picks up a Turkish book from the bookshelf. However, she always picks an English book if her mother or father reads. It’s because Sevgi gets bored as they have to read the Turkish books slowly and have to stop and explain some words for her. Thus, she prefers the English books if she has a choice. While I was talking to the adults about an hour, Sevgi twisted herself on the sofa with a notebook on her hand

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<sup>15</sup> Kissing the hand and putting it on the forehead is a respect to elders and it is common especially in the religious holidays in Turkish traditions.

and seemed sleepy. Then, she turned her grandmother and showed what she wrote down to the notebook. Sevgi Hanım got a squint and read aloud: “*Ben okulu çok seviyorum*” (I like the school so much). Then, she spotted a small mistake of forgetting to leave a space between the last two words. After that, she grabbed the pencil and underlined the mistake that the child has made.

Finally, I checked the time which was too late. I was also feeling tired to pay attention to such a demanding interview. Thus, I promptly checked my recordings to make sure they are properly done, then I kindly thanked the family for their gathering and contribution before leaving the house.

**Photo:** Selen Hanım (Ataturk’s signature printed on her t-shirt) was waiting her children’s presentations at Turkish complementary school with Omer (on the left, sitting next to her).

