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Family language policy and homescapes among multilingual families in Greece

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Abstract
This paper outlines a research that aimed to investigate the language repertoires, practices, and ideologies of Serbian-Greek families in Greece. It also attempted to trace family homescapes, focusing on the resources materialising and visibilising the heritage language and culture in the home, in order to understand their role in family language policies. Drawing from the fields of Family Language Policy (FLP) and Linguistic Landscape (LL), 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Serbian mothers and children, as well as 'homescape walking tours' with the participants. The research data show that language sustenance and the further development of children's bilingualism/multilingualism is an embedded social process that takes place through spatial and linguistic practices, within their homescapes, which include materialities that are accessible and visible to children and foster the children's (language, cultural, ethnic) identity formations. The implications of FLP and LL within the Serbian ethnic community, which has a long presence in the country and remains under-researched, are discussed in relation to contemporary urban multilingualism in Greece.

1. Introduction

This paper discusses aspects of urban multilingualism in Greece from the perspective of family language policy (henceforth FLP) and the home linguistic landscape (henceforth LL). FLP is an emerging field of study that bridges the gap between child language acquisition studies and language policy research (Lanza 2021). It looks into issues of language sustenance and shift in multilingual families and communities, while also addressing language ideologies and policies at a broader societal level in relation to migration and multilingualism in contemporary urban spaces. Following García (2013), in this paper I use the term "language sustenance", which goes beyond "language maintenance", a term that could imply a rather static view of speakers' language repertoires as comprising separate linguistic systems, in order to highlight the dynamic language practices of multilinguals for meaning-making and forming their complex, fluid identities. Greece, like many European countries, has experienced significant changes in the sociolinguistic landscape of its urban areas in particular, due to increased migration and mobility, both forced displacement and

voluntary migration. Especially in large cities such as Athens and Thessaloniki, language contact has brought about urban multilingualism as an everyday reality, in line with other European contexts (Cenoz 2013). There are several studies that explore urban multilingualism from various perspectives in Europe (Caliendo et al. 2020; Duarte & Gogolin 2013; Pennycook & Otsuji 2015) focusing on urban multilingual policies and practices. The field of LL studies offers a useful lens through which language diversity and multilingualism in urban settings can be mapped (Gorter & Cenoz 2024). More specifically, issues of language policy and language hierarchies can be studied by exploring the manifestation/materialization and contestation of languages/language varieties in public urban spaces (Shohamy 2015). Moreover, the dynamic field of FLP has recently turned its attention to a more sociolinguistic approach, looking into the language practices and policies in multilingual transnational families (Lanza 2021). According to Lanza (2021), this shift follows changes in the sociolinguistic study of multilingualism. Thus, emphasis is placed on critically exploring issues of agency and identity construction, lived experiences and multilingual repertoires, implicit language ideologies, while also addressing issues of power, social class, and linguistic justice (Lanza & Lomeu Gomes 2020).

The present study aims to investigate the language repertoires, practices and ideologies of Serbian-Greek families in Greece through the lens of FLP and LL, with a focus on their homescapes. More specifically, it looks into their beliefs and practices towards the heritage language and its sustenance, the development of children's multilingualism and the complex ways in which they identified with languages in their lives (Lanza 2021). It also attempts to trace the families' homescapes, focusing on the resources containing, materialising and visibilising the heritage language and culture in the home, in order to understand their role in the families' language policies (Melo-Pfeifer 2022; Yu 2022).

2. Family Language Policy (FLP): An overview

The field of FLP has gained considerable momentum over the last decade, building on the foundational work of King, Fogle & Logan-Terry (2008), who initially defined its scope and called for its study (see also Lanza 2021; Curdt-Christiansen 2018; Lanza & Lomeu Gomes 2020). Originally closely linked to language policy, FLP builds on the fields of child language acquisition, language socialization, and language maintenance and shift (Lanza 2021). According to King et al. (2008: 907), FLP can be defined "as explicit (Shohamy 2006) and overt (Schiffman 1996) planning in relation to language use within the home among family members". A broader definition has been provided by Curdt-Christiansen (2009: 352), who includes literacy practices in her definition: "family language policy (FLP) can be defined as a deliberate attempt at practicing a particular language use pattern and particular literacy practices within home domains and among family members". Two influential theoretical perspectives in FLP research have been proposed by Spolsky (2004) and King (2009) in their respective frameworks. According to King (2000, 2009), FLP is constituted by both macro- and micro factors, which affect language ideology, interacting bidirectionally and multidimensionally with language intervention and language practices. Spolsky's framework (2004) conceptualises FLP as a language policy consisting of three components: language practices, language beliefs, and language management. As

explained by Curdt-Christiansen (2013), FLP seeks to gain insight into the language ideologies of family members (what family members believe about language), language practices (what they do with language), and language management (what efforts they make to maintain language). In his later work, Spolsky (2019: 1) extended this framework to include within language management "the distinction between advocates (without power) and managers and the importance of self-management", also emphasizing the level of the individual.

Spolsky's model has had a significant impact on many subsequent studies, while more recent studies have attempted to move away from it, expanding its somewhat restrictive understanding of language policy (Lomeu Gomes 2018). King (2016) has provided a historical overview of the field of FLP, outlining five phases, with the latest (fourth and current) focusing on language competence not only as an outcome, but as a means through which adults and children define themselves, their family roles, and family life; it also draws attention to a greater variety of families as well as to heterogeneity and adaptability in research. In other words, research questions in FLP currently focus more on meaning and experience rather than on drawing "clear causal links across ideologies, practices, and outcomes" (King 2016: 731). Another important development in FLP concerns the concept of 'family', which is seen as dynamic, complex and conceptualised as a social space, which is negotiated through language practices rather than statically as a domain (Lanza 2021). Linguistic/multilingual repertoires, comprising the totality of one's language and semiotic resources, are seen to negotiate speakers' lived experiences of multilingualism and identity formation. Moreover, child agency is increasingly attracting attention in shaping FLP as well as identity choices (King & Fogle 2013), digital practices and the use of technologies (Lanza 2021). Thus, current FLP research focuses on notions of migration, mobility and multilingualism, employing more ethnographic and potentially critical approaches and methods and drawing attention to social categories (i.e. race, gender, sexuality, social class) and language practices. The need to include more critical voices from the Global South and to decentralise research from 'named languages', challenging traditional notions of language, is also currently being proposed (Lomeu Gomes 2018).

3. FLP in the Greek context

In Greece there are a few studies that look into FLP, directly and indirectly, mostly focusing on migrant families, especially those with Albanian migrant background, who belong to the largest migrant group in Greece. The first phase of research explored issues of language practices, language socialization, parental involvement, language maintenance and shift (Gkaintartzi 2012; Gogonas 2009, 2010). The research data have showed that although the home language was used for family communication, language management was not systematically employed, while the Greek language was prioritised for social integration and for parents' investment in children's school education (Gkaintartzi et al. 2014). There are signs of language shift shown among second generation Albanian immigrants in Greece, while measures for intergenerational language transmission are not actively pursued among the families (Gogonas 2009).

Further research has documented Albanian migrant parents' positive attitudes towards language maintenance and their desire for heritage language education,

highlighting the ideological conflicts and dilemmas in their discourse (Androulakis et al. 2017). According to Gkaintartzi et al. (2014), based on a critical discourse analysis, three broad categories of ideological stances emerged from family discourse, which can be placed on a continuum ranging from resistant voices fighting for their language rights, to more in-between and rather conciliatory voices. It is important to note that Albanian migrant families in Greece do not present a uniform picture with regard to language sustenance and shift, but vary in the degree of their commitment to it, which can be further understood by studying their language ideologies. More recent studies on the language attitudes and practices of Albanian migrant families have shown increased use and high perceived value of the Greek language among its members without, however, pointing to a clear language shift trajectory, as the Albanian language is still present in family communication at home and community schools contribute significantly to its sustenance (Chatzidaki et al. 2021; Mattheoudakis et al. 2020). As seen, the research focus of FLP in Greece has been on migrant/minoritised languages with a low perceived status. A very small number of studies have investigated FLP in relation to prestigious languages such as English (Matthaioudaki & Maligkoudi 2015) and Italian (Maligkoudi 2019). A study of Chinese immigrant parents' practices and policies in Greece has shown that they actively support the development of a bicultural identity/bilingual identity, employing mediation practices, while also investing in their children's Greek language learning at school (Sorkos & Magos 2022). It seems that in the case of home languages with high perceived value or of valued linguistic repertories with privilege (Piller 2021), families use more systematic language sustenance practices. This shows how FLP is shaped by broader linguistic hierarchies and ideologies (Chatzidaki & Maligkoudi 2023).

Over 15,000 Serbs live in Greece; most of them live in mixed families, usually with a mother of Serbian origin and a Greek father. Concerning the Serbian language, after the break-up of Yugoslavia, the creation of new states also led to linguistic divisions. The Serbo-Croatian language was divided into Croatian and Serbian (Burgarski 2011). Catholic Croats have adopted the Latin alphabet, while Orthodox Serbs (and Montenegrins) use the Cyrillic alphabet in parallel with the Latin script, which is mostly used in everyday communication. Greek-Serbian relations (also known as 'Greco-Serbian friendship') are traditionally very friendly, due to cultural, historical, religious and also economic factors such as tourism. Moreover, these families in Greece are quite invisible in terms of their bi/multilingualism, as most of them come from mixed marriages, have Greek in their repertoires and are thus perceived as integrated/assimilated. Serbs residing in Greece are also rather under-researched in Greece, as no relevant sociolinguistic study can be found to date, to the best of my knowledge. These families are also interesting to study in terms of their attitudes towards languages and the perceived value of bilingualism, taking into account the friendly political relations between the two countries and their religious affiliation to Orthodox Christianity.

4. Homescapes and FLP

The study of LL is a dynamic field which has widely expanded towards various epistemological perspectives, contributing significantly to the visibility of social and lived multilingualism and to the study of language policy and identity in public spaces

(Canakis 2019; Cenoz & Gorter 2006; Gorter & Cenoz 2023; Landry & Bourhis 1997). Expanding significantly its original scope within the public-private continuum and including a wide range of multimodal semiotic resources (Shohamy 2015), the LL has had a significant impact on various fields. Nevertheless, few studies have examined FLP through the lens of LL (Boivin 2021; Yu 2022; Kitsiou & Bratimou 2024). Conceptualising the family as a space in which meaning and relationships are negotiated through linguistic and semiotic resources, that is, the multilingual repertoire (Lanza 2021: 765), brings FLP closer to the study of LL. Homescapes refer to the LL of the family, which is currently perceived as a space along the semi-public and private continuum. According to Melo-Pfeifer (2022: 608), the study of homescapes can "provide valuable insights into family language policies, i.e., the sometimes tacit (and unspoken) or blatantly explicit planning in relation to language maintenance, transmission, and/or use within the home among family members". The concept of the homescape has been defined by Boivin (2021) as a space where diverse families use experiential, non-interactional multisensory discourse resources to actively negotiate identity formations. Boivin's approach (2021; 2023) highlights the spatial and temporal dimension of home and agency in identity framing through multisensory discourse resources, which include resources of the homescape experienced by family members through sense, memory or bodily exposure (smelt, viewed, felt, heard, and touched) and used unconsciously and emotionally for identity framing.

Multilingual families use a variety of resources to sustain the home language and enhance their children's multilingualism, which are related to specific spatial and language practices. Material homescapes include visible linguistic resources, also referred to as 'language-defined objects' (Aronin & Ó Laoire 2012), such as books and toys, as well as non-linguistic cultural resources, which also contribute to home language sustenance and identity negotiation. Yu's research on homescapes and FLP explored 'language-containing' resources in the home and related practices among Chinese-German families by engaging family members in digital walking tours, taking photos and sharing their lived experiences. The results showed the multiple aspects of homescapes as opportunities for language learning and identity construction, while highlighting children's agency in making their own use of different resources at home. Melo-Pfeifer's (2022) review of the linguistic landscapes of homes focusing on children's toys, books, and games showed that multilingual families use material homescapes to develop their children's multiliteracies and to enhance their language development as a social process. Common practices, especially in the early years, include reading picture books, using textbooks, watching television programmes, engaging with online platforms and smartphone applications, playing with educational toys and online games, singing songs and using technology to communicate with extended family members (Melo-Pfeifer 2022). Visual and acoustic homescapes contribute to children's bi/multilingualism. Several studies have shown that, within family language practices, languages are often preferred to be kept separate. Bilingual picture books used at home may reinforce this language separation, through the ways they present and organize the languages.

5. The study: Research aims

The present study aimed at investigating the language repertoires, practices and ideologies of Serbian-Greek families in Greece through the scope of FLP. More specifically, it looked into their beliefs and practices regarding the heritage language and its sustenance, the development of children's bilingualism and the complex ways in which they identified with languages in their lives (Lanza 2021). It also attempted to trace the families' homescapes, focusing on the resources, objects and signs, 'containing', 'materialising' and making visible the heritage language and culture in the home, in order to analyse their role in family language policies (Melo-Pfeifer 2022; Yu 2022).

5.1 Methodology

15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Serbian mothers as well as with children in the families in order to approach the research aims from both perspectives. Additionally, a digital "homescape walking tour" (Yu 2022) was employed, in which the participants virtually guided the researcher through their homes. The participants also took photographs of objects, linguistic signs, and other semiotic resources related to their heritage language and culture, and shared their experiences with them. They were asked to actively select the homescape resources to share with the researcher during the virtual walking tours. 9 mothers of Serbian origin in mixed language families participated in the research (8 Serbian-Greek families and 1 Serbian-German-Greek family) and three children from Serbian-Greek families. The three children were 18 and 19 years old at the time of the research, so they are not approached as such based on their actual age, but from their perspective and role as children in these families for the purposes of the research. Participants were recruited from the researcher's social networks in the community, with the help of some of the mothers-participants, acting as mediators. Below are the tables with the participants' profiles.

Mothers' pseudonyms	Years of residence in Greece	Level of studies - profession	Greek language acquisition/ learning	Place of residence in Greece	Children's attendance at Serbian community schools (in years)
1. Nadia	9	University-microbiologist	Non formal	Ptolemaida-Asprovalta	online classes
2. Jorka	25	University	Non formal	Athens	8 years
3. Daniela	8	University (Physicist)	Non formal Interview in English	Thessaloniki-Asprovalta	3 years attendance
4. Slavica	30	Secondary (12 years)	Non formal	Larisa	8 years
5. Branka	15	PHD Lecturer	Non formal and formal	Athens	2 years
6. Galina	19	University (Economics)	Non formal	Larisa	8 years
7. Danka	27	University (Music and pedagogical studies)	Non formal and formal	Athens	5 years
8. Jelena	12	University (Classic philology)	Non formal and formal	Kilkis	Online (2 years)
9. Natasha	13	University (Economics)	Non formal	Volos	NO

Table 1: Mothers' profiles

Children's pseudonyms	Age	Family	Occupation	Languages	Place of residence	Serbian community school
Alexandra	19	Mixed, Serbian mother-Greek father, born in Greece	University Student in Belgrade	Greek-Serbian-English	Volos	8 years of attendance-graduated
Maria	19	Mixed, Serbian mother-Greek father born in Greece	University Student in Greece	Greek-Serbian-English	Athens	8 years of attendance-graduated
Filippos	18	Mixed, Serbian mother-Greek father born in Greece	School student	Greek-Serbian-English	Larisa	8 years of attendance-graduated

Table 2. Children's profiles

Individual interviews were conducted with the mothers and 'children', separately, and one interview was conducted with both parents together. One interview was conducted mostly in English and the rest in Greek. Most interviews were conducted online, while one was carried out in person. The interview protocol included questions that related to family language practices and choices, language/bilingual competence, family literacy development and language maintenance/sustenance. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Besides the interviews, the "homescape walking tour" methodology (Yu 2022) was deployed, where some of the participants, who were interviewed, digitally guided the researcher through their home via their mobile phones or their laptops, while sharing their thoughts and experiences with the homescape resources they chose to display and collect. Moreover, photographs of homescapes were collected by the participants themselves and sent to the researcher. It is important to note that the participants were asked to look for objects and other semiotic resources in their homescapes that were related to their language and cultural repertoires, and were considered important for their multilingual/multicultural identities, not necessarily only linguistically defined elements, but also cultural, multisensory objects materialising their bi/multilingualism in the home**.** The mediation of the participants in the

selection of the homescape resources they wanted to share is important to consider. Participants took on an agentic role, actively collaborating as "homescape ethnographers" in the collection of data showing and sharing their own choices and reflections on their homescapes. Photos of homescape resources were sent to the researcher and initially categorized, paying particular attention to heritage language sustenance and their functions in the homescape (Yu 2022). The data, including verbal and visual, was analysed using critical analysis (Lawless & Chen 2018) and multimodal discourse analysis (Boivin 2023).

6. Findings

6.1 Mapping family language repertoires and practices

All the mothers have multilingual repertoires, including Greek, the majority language, which they have learnt mainly through daily communication and contact in a relatively short period of time, while two have also attended Greek language courses. They have lived in Greece for a long time, ranging from 9 to 30 years. They all have links with Serbia and often travel there to visit their relatives. Most of the fathers do not speak Serbian, apart from three cases who have learnt the language through work or studies. Greek is mainly used for communication with the fathers and for interaction among all family members, so that everyone can understand and participate in the communication. Among siblings, although Serbian is very present in their everyday interactions, as they grow older, Greek is chosen in most cases, but alternating with Serbian. In families with young children and with fewer years in Greece (ten years), Serbian is mostly used between mothers and children, especially in the early years before the children attend the Greek school system.

In the case of participants who have lived in Greece for a long time (25-30 years), Greek appears to be gradually included into their language use at home. More specifically, when the children start school in Greece, a shift to Greek is seen, following pressures and needs from the wider context. From a retrospective perspective, Jorka (having lived in Greece for 25 years) reflects on their family practices:

> You know, I am not one of those fanatics who will speak Serbian to the children. I mostly speak Greek, I don't know why, because I find more ease in something. I'm not one of them. Something always confuses me and I switch to Greek. I basically speak Greek with the children. From the beginning I tried to speak Serbian, but with the nursery school, with the schools and everything, it was difficult for them, so I spoke Greek.
>
> Εγώ δεν είμαι από τους φανατικούς που θα μιλήσουν με τα παιδιά σερβικά. Δηλαδή περισσότερο μιλάω ελληνικά, έτσι δεν ξέρω, για κάποια ευκολία για κάτι. Δεν είμαι από αυτούς. Πάντα κάτι με μπερδεύει και περνάω στα ελληνικά. Βασικά ελληνικά μιλάω με τα παιδιά. Από την αρχή προσπαθούσα να μιλήσω σέρβικα αλλά με τον [παιδικό] σταθμό, με τα σχολεία και με όλα, πάντα μιλούσα ελληνικά, και αυτά δυσκολευόντουσαν.

Jorka attempts to distance herself from 'them', the other mothers who speak Serbian to their children, and whose insistence she perceives as 'fanaticism'. Through this choice of words, she may wish to rationalise and defend her own language choices, which she has used to follow and adapt to communication needs,

children's language choices and agency as well as wider educational priorities. The use of Serbian by mothers and children differs across families in degree, systematicity, and persistence; however, Serbian is present in family communication. A pattern of transition seems to emerge from maximum use of Serbian between mothers and children, in the first years of childhood, to a more frequent choice of Greek, which gradually becomes easier for them to use.

In families with fewer years in Greece and with younger children, mothers articulate their efforts to use the heritage language with their children in a more persistent and committed way. They invest in their role for language sustenance and in supporting their children's bilingual development. This investment materializes through different practices and strategies. Some have resorted to the use of Greek, alongside Serbian, while others insist on using Serbian exclusively. They seem to perceive their role as 'gatekeepers' of the Serbian language, taking full responsibility for the children's bilingual development in the family (Piller & Gerber 2018), as shown in Nadia's quote: *I am a mom who must speak Serbian more for all of us (Είμαι μαμά που πρέπει πιο πολύ να μιλάει σέρβικα για όλους μας).* The use of the modal word *must* indicates the necessity and sense of obligation she feels to sustain the Serbian language for the children, for the family. This sense of responsibility among mothers is enacted through a variety of language practices and strategies to facilitate the children's bilingual development. Jelena reflects on their language practices as follows:

> Yes, when they were young **it was clearer**, as they grew up and we are all four together, and I speak Greek more, we may switch it[...]I don't think that Serbian became worse, but that Greek improved, that's what we're saying, **it just didn't have the space and the time**, as it had before, to progress and improve.
>
> Ναι, όσο ήταν μικρά ήταν πιο ξεκάθαρα, όσο μεγάλωσαν και είμαστε και οι τέσσερις, και εγώ μιλάω πιο πολύ ελληνικά, γίνεται να το γυρνάμε […]Δεν νομίζω ότι έγινε χειρότερη η σερβική αλλά ότι βελτιώθηκε η ελληνική, αυτό λέμε, απλά δεν **είχε χώρο και χρόνο,** όσο είχε πριν, να προχωράει και να βελτιώνεται.

Jelena's choice of the comparative form *clearer* shows the gradual transition from language practices reflecting a clear separation of languages, when the children were younger, to more hybrid, flexible language choices, switching and translanguaging across linguistic boundaries as they grow up. Most couples communicate with each other in Greek, while in two cases English is also used as a mediating language. The families' language repertoires and language practices are characterized by a high degree of fluidity as conditions (social and geographical spaces), their priorities and needs change. Jelena does not explicitly and directly express a comparative, antagonistic relationship between the two languages, but highlights the fluidity and unstable distribution/composition of language resources in their repertoires.

6.2 From monoglossic practices to translanguaging

A main pattern in their family language policy is that parents mostly choose to use their languages separately with their children, especially when they are young. This language policy –a strategy known as OPOL: One Parent, One Language (Lanza 2021)– can be realized through different practices. In most cases, when the children are

young, mothers choose Serbian to communicate with their children and fathers choose Greek, while Greek is also mostly used among all family members. This reflects parents' language beliefs about languages as separate systems with strict boundaries between them. English is also used as a third mediating language between the parents in two cases where the mothers cannot adequately communicate solely in Greek. As shown in Daniela's quote (original version below):

> I can say that that we are **100% bilingual family**, 100%, so the father speaks only Greek, I speak only Serbian even when we are out, μόνο όταν έχει κάποιο παιδάκι που παίζουνε και θέλω να καταλαβαίνει, μιλάω ελληνικά, αλλιώς μόνο σέρβικα (switch to Greek- *only when they play with other children and I want them to understand, do I speak Greek, otherwise only Serbian*[...]**They' re like switch** [...]even the small one who is now two […]If I ask him something in Serbian and the father is next to him and then he repeats the question, the same question, in Greek, which happens often because this is how we communicate, he immediately switches to the other language. So we are 100% bilingual family, not many are like this, they have told me.

Daniela reflects an idealised perception of *100%* bilingualism, which involves the use of the OPOL strategy of keeping languages separate between the mother's and father's zones, leading children to switch to each parent's first language. However, she mixes languages in her own quote above, which might suggest that in reality it is very difficult and rather idealised for bilinguals to keep languages apart.

Over time, as the children grow up, translanguaging seems to infiltrate family communication. Hybrid, heteroglossic language practices are employed in the family, especially actively initiated by the children, agentively crossing boundaries between named languages. As stated by Alexandra (child):

> There has always been the rule, let's say, that with Mom we speak in Serbian, with Dad we speak in Greek and with each other they mostly speak in Greek. **All together?... I call it mixed** [...] There is no problem, so it is **a safer place** to make mistakes and to learn some new things through mistakes [...]

> Πάντα υπήρχε ο κανονισμός, ας πούμε ότι με τη μαμά μιλάμε στα σέρβικα, με τον μπαμπά μιλάμε στα ελληνικά και μεταξύ τους κυρίως στα ελληνικά. **Όλοι μαζί; Εγώ το λέω ανάμεικτα** [...] Δεν υπάρχει κανένα πρόβλημα, οπότε είναι ένα πιο **safe place** και για να κάνουμε λάθη και για να μάθεις κάποια καινούργια πράγματα μέσα από τα λάθη […]

In Alexandra's case, the OPOL strategy was clearly reinforced as a "rule" in parent-child interactions. However, when all the family members communicated together, the boundaries between named languages were crossed. A contradiction can be seen here between the OPOL strategies of the parents to sustain the heritage language and support bilingualism, and the mixed language choices made in family communication between all family members. It seems that beyond the parents' rules of language separation, Greek and Serbian become a mixed, fluid system of communication among all, which facilitates a sense of safety and comfort and provides new opportunities for (language) learning. The children's agency plays an important role in this process (Lanza 2021). It is seen that the family is constructed as a *safe place* through *mixed* language practices; a hybrid, heteroglossic space where

family members feel safe and free to use their full language repertoires. This safe space constructed through flexible, multilingual family practices can be approached as a third space or, according to Li Wei (2018: 23-24), a "translanguaging space", a space "created by and for translanguaging practices, and a space where language users break down the ideologically laden dichotomies between the macro and the micro, the societal and the individual, and the social and the psychological through interaction".

This "translanguaging space" in the family is also reflected in the next quote by Natasha:

> While eating, I say something in Serbian, "јести" [jesti] "eat" to the little one and the old one says "he doesn't eat anything!" in Serbian, and my husband says "what are you saying now?" [in Greek] And I answer in English "He doesn't eat" and the children also know English and answer in English.
>
> Τρώμε, εγώ λέω κάτι στα σερβικά, "јести"[jesti] «φάε» στον μικρό και ο μεγάλος λέει «δεν τρώει τίποτα!» στα σέρβικα, και ο άντρας μου λέει «τι λέτε τώρα;» Κι εγώ απαντάω στα αγγλικά «He doesn't eat» και ξέρουν και τα παιδιά αγγλικά και απαντάνε στα αγγλικά.

It is through such interactions between parents and children that family language policies are shaped and materialised, making use of all the language resources available in the family's multilingual repertoires and legitimizing code-mixing and translanguaging practices in multilingual communication. As Danka reflects:

> There are words like **'agapic',** we can't say just 'agapi' [the word 'love' in Greek], we say **'agapic',-ic** is the ending in Serbian, and we do it like this.
>
> Υπάρχουν λέξεις, όπως είναι 'αγάπιτς', εμείς δεν μπορούμε να πούμε μόνο 'αγάπη', λέμε 'αγάπιτς', - ιτς είναι η κατάληξη στα σέρβικα, και το κάνουμε έτσι.

The aspect of multilingual speakers' creativity that is linked to and activated by translanguaging is evident in this quote, since choosing only the Greek or the Serbian word for 'love' cannot fully encapsulate the meanings and senses attached to the concept of 'love' that they want to share and communicate with each other. According to Li Wei (2018: 23-24), "translanguaging is not simply going between different linguistic structures, cognitive and semiotic systems and modalities, but going beyond them", emphasizing the creativity of multilinguals in transcending boundaries and creating new language possibilities for communication. Thus, through this creative integration of mutually shared languages, new possibilities are created for sense and meaning-making, emotional bonding, family ties and expression in the family (Hirsch & Kayam 2020). This points to the notion of a multilingual familylect, which refers to shared language practices that co-construct a family identity and culture; through which family members "create family" (Van Mensel 2018). Danka reflects on their familylect:

> We were very much language-creators (glossoplastes), because whatever we wanted to say, we did so, we **'Serbio-hellenicized' it or we 'Greek-serbianized'** it. We made word for words, so that we could see who would do smarter things, funnier and stuff like that, and we burst into laughter.
>
> Ήμασταν πάρα πολύ γλωσσοπλάστες, επειδή οτιδήποτε θέλουμε να πούμε το λέγαμε, **το σέρβο-ελληνοποιούσαμε ή το ελληνο-σερβοποιούσαμε**. Κάναμε λέξεις- λέξεις, έτσι και να δούμε ποιος θα κάνει πιο έξυπνα πράγματα, πιο αστεία και τέτοια και ξεκαρδιζόμασταν από τα γέλια.

In Danka's familylect, all available language resources are exploited in a playful and creative way, experimenting with translanguaging and creating new ways of communicating and meaning-making, crossing boundaries and challenging norms. Such family language practices construct and negotiate spaces for playful communication, family ties and creativity (Lomeu Gomes 2020).

6.3 Ideological tensions and identity negotiation

Mothers and children express various ideological[1] tensions and ambivalences in their discourse, which are part of their family language ideologies and echo or challenge wider dominant socio-political and educational language beliefs. Concerns about children's educational success and identity development are expressed by mothers with younger children, which may potentially shape or affect their language practices. In the following quote, Natasha expresses her hesitation and feelings of fear about speaking Serbian with the children at home:

> Now at home it's only me, [I speak] only Serbian, I know **it's not good** because they go to school here, I think it should be the Greek language first and then the Serbian, **I'm a little afraid for the school**.
>
> Τώρα στο σπίτι είμαι μόνο εγώ, μιλάω μόνο σέρβικα, ξέρω ότι **δεν είναι καλό**, επειδή εδώ πάει σχολείο, νομίζω πρέπει να είναι η ελληνική πρώτα και μετά η σερβική, **φοβάμαι** λίγο για το σχολείο.

Her FLP is challenged by concerns that she may be jeopardising her children's Greek language competence and school performance (Piller & Gerber 2018). She seems to vacillate between her actual language choice of speaking Serbian at home and the broader monolingual mindset (Clyne 2008), reinforced by the school's language policies. *Knowing* that speaking the heritage language at home is not *good* echoes a wider monolingual ideology, which problematizes the use of minoritised languages in the family for children's school language development. The dominance and hegemonic perceived value of Greek in the Greek educational and social context, favouring only high-status foreign languages (Gkaintartzi et al. 2014), is seen to circumscribe parents' discourse on multilingualism, while on the other hand it is

[1] The term "identity" is used throughout the text with critical awareness of its limitations, and approached as fluid, performative, dynamic, socially constructed, negotiated though discourse, and context-dependent (see e.g. Bucholtz & Hall 2005).

taken for granted that only parents are responsible for the development of bilingualism and heritage language sustenance.

Maria (child) reflects in the following quote:

> Simply in general there is this negative perception that Greek is better than all languages, that the Greek culture is better than all and they don't accept anything else [...] [at school] they didn't think it was important, even though to me it was **the most important thing I have**, because it's basically what I've had in all my life. **It comes from my home.**
>
> Απλά υπάρχει γενικά αυτή η κακή αντίληψη ότι είναι ότι τα ελληνικά είναι καλυτέρα από όλες τις γλώσσες, ότι ο ελληνικός πολιτισμός είναι καλύτερος από όλους και δεν δέχονται κάτι άλλο […][στο σχολείο] θεωρούσαν ότι δεν είναι κάτι το σημαντικό παρόλο που για μένα ήταν ό,τι πιο σημαντικό έχω, γιατί είναι **ουσιαστικά αυτό που έχω όλη μου τη ζωή. Είναι μέσα από το σπίτι μου.**

Conflicting messages are clearly evident in the participants' discourse, highlighting the fact that they have to deal with wider monolingual ideologies and policies, which are overall rather intolerant of linguistic and cultural diversity. In the school context, overlooking or simply not dealing with linguistic capital –other than Greek– conveys the unspoken message of devaluing them. On the other hand, students' language and cultural repertoires are linked to their own lives; they carry their home with them. Ideology, agency, and identity are constructed and enacted among the families in different ways in interaction with wider ideological stances, while children's agency is shown to shape and be shaped by language practices across time and space (Smith-Christmas 2022). Maria, referring to some, very few, past incidents of racism against her in the school context, makes the following argument as her response to defend herself:

> I explain that my country is Greece, I was born in Greece, I grew up in Greece. It's just that my mom is from Serbia and she lives in Greece. In other words, **we are not even migrants, not even refugees.**
>
> Και εξηγώ ότι εμένα η χώρα μου είναι η Ελλάδα, γεννήθηκα στην Ελλάδα, μεγάλωσα στην Ελλάδα. Απλά η μαμά μου είναι από τη Σερβία και μένει στην Ελλάδα. Δηλαδή δεν είμαστε ούτε καν μετανάστες, ούτε καν πρόσφυγες.

The two children, Maria and Alexandra, differentiate themselves and their status as language speakers from migrants and refugees in Greece, based on their bicultural origin and identity; they claim a different position for their language/cultural capital in the existing language hierarchies in Greek society. The development of a multilingual/bicultural identity among the children is an ongoing process that the mothers have fought for with varying degrees of intensity and persistence and amidst conflicting ideologies, mostly by speaking Serbian, supporting their bilingual development with a variety of materials and resources, and sending their children to community schools. To quote Daniela, a mother who clearly insists on speaking Serbian with her children:

> It is something that comes out of me, it may be my desire to keep roots with my country, because my older daughter, she goes every Saturday to the Serbian school, which is in Thessaloniki, we travel there every Saturday [...] I think I'm pretty much a rare case. I'm so stubborn, speaking only my language. Not all families are like this. Some of the mothers speak to their kids Greek, some of them exclusively Serbian, they are pretty much mixed. (original version)

The heritage language has an affective, experiential, multisensory role, as it *comes out* of her, from her *soul*. Families are seen to differ in their FLP and the actual practices through which it is realised, showing a rather mixed picture. Her insistence on the exclusive use of Serbian in mother-child interactions is perceived by Daniela as something *rare* compared to other mothers' language choices and it is considered a result of her *stubbornness*, a fixed compliance with and commitment to her bilingual policy.

6.4 Family language policies through homescapes

Moving on to the analysis of FLP through the lens of homescapes, the pictures of homescape resources collected by the participants were first classified into the categories appearing in Figure 1, based on specific attention to heritage language sustenance and their functions in the homescape (Yu 2022).

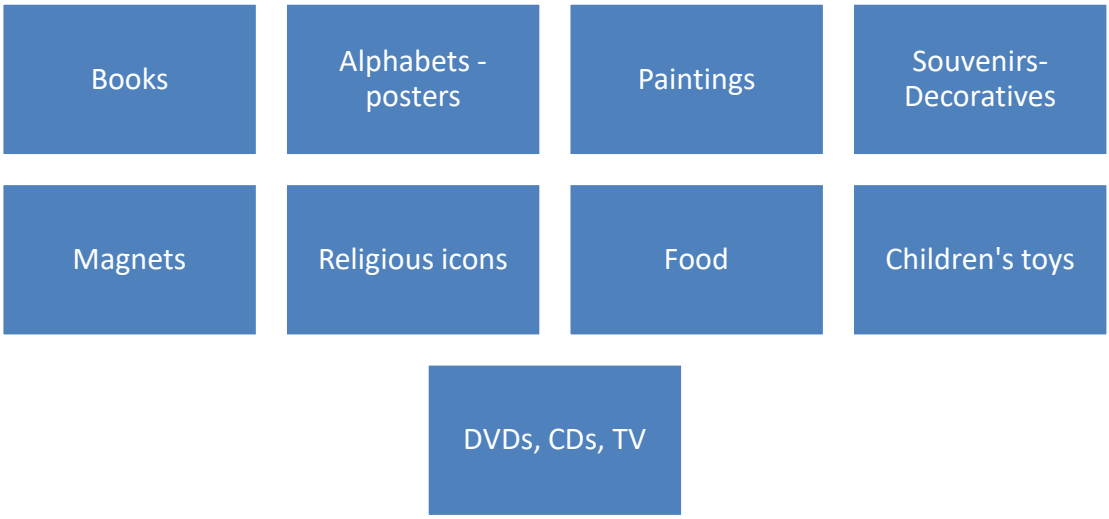


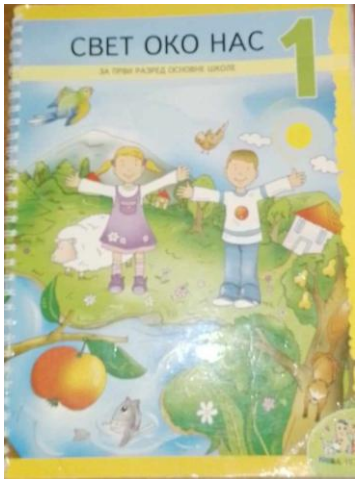
Figure 1: Categories of homescape resources

A further critical thematic analysis of the categories of objects was carried out with the verbal data from the digital walking tours (Yu 2022), as the participants also articulated their thoughts, experiences, and feelings about these objects. The homescape resources are seen to function as language-defined/literacy, multisensory and culturally loaded resources. The language-defined objects are those that include the linguistic component which itself transforms and defines their nature, making them more focused and specific than other cultural resources (Aronin & Ó Laoire 2012: 8). Thus, they are closely related to children's bilingual/biliterate development. Language-defined objects (Figure 2) include children's books in Serbian, which play a central role in the development of family biliteracy and dominate the families' homescapes, especially in the case of young children. Alphabets on wall posters or magnets provide constant exposure to the

Serbian Cyrillic alphabet, especially when children are young. Also, 'lektira' (Figure 7), which in Serbian refers to required or recommended reading, including literary works, as part of the school curriculum or studies, are common homescape resources provided by the mothers.

Multisensory objects are resources that involve all the senses and are less dependent on language (Figure 4), while in culturally loaded resources the heritage cultural aspect is central (Figure 3).

Children's literature in Serbian, toys, games		
1 	2 	3 

Alphabet books, coursebooks, posters		
4 	5 	6 

Mothers' *lektira*	
7 	8 

Figure 2: Language-defined / literacy resources

1. The Serbian flag on stickers at the back of a car	2. Painting of national hero Miloš Obilić- battle at Kossovo	3. Religious icons
		

Figure 3: Cultural and religious resources

1. Biscuits, sauce, and chocolate cream	2. Cough drops, Odžačargrla/ Оџачаргрла/ negro bombone, Ajvar- red pepper sauce	3. Guzle- the national musical instrument of Serbia
		

Figure 4: Multisensory resources

All homescape resources are multimodal as they combine different modes of communication such as linguistic, visual, auditory, taste, and tactile (Boivin 2022). In terms of space, most of them included spaces for family use or exposure, such as children's bedrooms, the kitchen, the living room, and the family's car. In the cases of families with young children, the language-defined/literacy resources are central to their homescapes, as mothers regularly read books with their children, spend time with them watching cartoons on TV or CDs, sing songs, refer to the Cyrillic alphabet on wall posters. Concerning the issue of the systematic digraphia of Serbian, both alphabets (Cyrillic and Latin) are present in the families' homescape resources, as evidenced from the data. Cyrillic is an "identitarian script" in Serbia but the Latin script is ubiquitous and fully integrated into everyday life and communication (Bugarski 2011; Canakis 2018). Therefore, the multilingualism of children in mixed Greek-Serbian marriages involves triple literacy (use of three writing systems: Greek, Cyrillic, and Latin).

In several cases it was reported that children had developed biliteracy at a very early age by reading children's literature with their mothers every day. As children attend Serbian community schools, coursebooks/primers –and mothers' *lektira* in Serbian– become even more visible in their homescapes. In terms of the families' heritage language sustenance and biliteracy practices, it is shown that homescapes are constructed in such a way as to facilitate children's language learning (i.e. books), but also to maintain their motivation and commitment to it though exposure to multimodal/multisensory resources (i.e. alphabets on magnets and wall posters). In the case of families with much older children, the language-defined/literacy resources become peripheral to their homescapes, since the development of the children's biliteracy/bilingualism no longer seems to be central to their FLP anymore.

If we take the first picture from Figure 2 as an example, it depicts part of a child's bookshelf and desk, with children's books in Serbian and in Greek on the shelf, a

game with letters of the Cyrillic Alphabet on cubes at the front, while on the left a small Serbian flag covers the child's desk. On the wall to the right of it, the child's drawing is displayed on a notice board. She has drawn the Serbian flag, with a small red heart above it and the word *Serbia* written in the colour of the flag. Next to it, on the left, is a small picture of Saint George, one of the most important saints in Eastern Orthodoxy. He is depicted through a typical icon, riding his horse and killing a dragon. Above this is a typical geographical map of the country of Greece on the wall and on the right is a calendar with a photo of the school class in greek. The assemblage of language-defined/ literacy objects such as books and toys, cultural resources such as a fabric flag, religious resources (icons) and a self-made artecraft, the child's drawing of the Serbian flag with a red heart to express her love, highlights the agentive, purposeful and unconscious construction of homescapes for language development and identity formation. Through the use of multimodal resources that also have an experiential, sentimental value and are related to memory, the families agentively support the construction of ethical, cultural and religious identities and also show how the Serbian language is connected with emotions and identification.

Moving on to an example of multisensory resources (Figure 4), *Plazma* biscuits, a Serbian staple snack still cherished all over ex-Yugoslavia, are very popular in their homescapes, while several mothers use a typical cooking seasoning or spice called *Začin C*. Some of these resources such as the *Plazma* biscuits can also be more directly linked to language practices, as in the case of Jelena's family, where her daughter watches videos and reads texts on the Internet about recipes using *Plazma*. In the following quote, Jelena reflects on the use of multisensory and cultural resources in her homescape:

> I think all [resources] are combined together, with souvenirs and with books, they combine what they read, these historical ones and I try very hard, if someone sends us something, to have children know the story around it, behind it, to talk to them and **convey lived moments and experiences to them** [...][Families] don't do it just to help the children [with language] **but to transfer the environment**, not **to lose their life** where they are situated, **to have something from their past life, to have their home**, not to feel like aliens who are just placed somewhere, to have something **that connects us to our old life** […] I am here and there are some objects that I carry from there [Serbia] here [Greece], they are connected to spaces, landscapes, people, and moments in my life.

> Νομίζω όλα συνδυάζονται μαζί, και με σουβενίρ και με τα βιβλία, συνδυάζουν αυτά που διαβάζουν, αυτά τα ιστορικά και προσπαθώ πολύ, αν μας στείλει κάποιος κάτι, να ξέρουν και την ιστορία γύρω από αυτό, να τους μιλάω και να τους μεταφέρω, **βιώματα, εμπειρίες** […] Δεν το κάνουν [οι οικογένειες] μόνο για να βοηθάμε τα παιδιά [με τη γλώσσα] αλλά για **να μεταφέρουμε το περιβάλλον**, **να μην χάσουν τη ζωή τους** εκεί που είναι, **να έχουν κάτι από την προηγούμενη ζωή, να έχουν το σπίτι τους**, να μην νιώθουν σαν εξωγήινοι που μας βάλανε κάπου, να έχουν κάτι που **μας συνδέει με την παλιά ζωή μας**[…] Είμαι εδώ και είναι κάποια αντικείμενα που κουβαλώ από εκεί εδώ, συνδέονται με τοπία, μέρη και πρόσωπα στη ζωή μου.

Jelena reflects on the agentive role of homescape resources, which complement and combine each other in identity negotiation and formation. It is not only about sustaining and developing the children's multi/bilingualism, but also about *transferring* the lived experience, the emotions, their past memories, *their past life*

and sharing, reconstructing them with their children to strengthen identity formations. Based on the participants' reflections in the verbal data, it is shown that they can be approached as multisensory discourse resources (Boivin 2021), as they play an agentive role in the development of the families' (ethnic, religious, cultural, national) identities.

Following Boivin's (2021) categorization of multisensory discourse resources into interactional and experiential, language-defined/literacy resources could be classified as mostly interactional as they involve social interaction and verbal communication between family members, e.g. reading books, narrating stories. Cultural, religious, and multisensory discourse resources appear to be mostly experiential, as family members experience them mostly through exposure and sensory memory, and thus their affiliation/belonging is mostly experiential and emotionally linked to memory and lived experience. Unlike alphabets and books, in which the linguistic and cognitive aspect is central, they involve mostly emotional mediation and sense memory (Boivin 2021). However, my research data points to more fluid and complex categories, since homescape resources can be actively utilised by family members in either way, or alternatively, as in Jelena's case, where she makes interactive use of multisensory discourse resources, such as with souvenirs, telling the *story* behind them *to convey* the lived moments and emotions around them. She uses them to build on the family's collective memory and to enhance the children's identity formations.

Synthesizing the findings from participants' interviews and their homescapes, the heritage language appears to be central to the affirmation of ethnic and cultural identity and also has an affective, experiential and multisensory meaning (Boivin 2021). Although families appear to differ in their FLP, the heritage language plays an important role in their multilingual familylects (Van Mensel 2018), connecting them as a family and contributing to identity formation.

7. Discussion

This study explored the interplay between aspects of family language policy and homescapes among multilingual families. Conducting semi-structured interviews with family members and digital "homescape walking tours" with them, it aimed to look into the language repertoires, practices and ideologies of Serbian-Greek families in Greece and to trace family homescapes, focusing on the resources, objects, and signs containing, materializing, and visibilising the heritage language and culture in the home, in order to understand their role in the language policies of participating families (Melo-Pfeifer 2022; Yu 2022). Following semi-structure interviews, the participants virtually guided the researcher in their homes, took pictures of objects, signs and semiotic resources related to the heritage language, and culture and shared their experiences with them and their views in engaging discussions. Data analysis showed that the dynamic interaction between FLP and the families' homescapes (Yu 2022). According to Yu (2022), homescapes can be perceived as the product of FLP, and a reflex of FLP, on the one hand, and as the wider material environment for family language policy and language practices, on the other. The present research data highlighted both aspects, as homescape resources were seen to be used in some families (especially in cases with young children) as a deliberate and unconscious component of the FLP. Moreover, in most cases, homescapes seem

to function beyond FLP as part of the broader material culture of multilingualism in the family space. According to Aronin & Ó Laoire (2012: 4), the material culture of multilingualism "comprises materialities relating to multilingual way of existence, whether by individuals or by societies".

Language sustenance and the further development of children's bilingualism/ multilingualism is an embedded social process that takes place within their homescapes, which include materialities that are accessible and visible to children, and that foster children's (linguistic, cultural, ethnic) identity formation. Mothers are seen as actively using the design of their homescapes to enhance the children's bilingual development and identity affiliations, especially in the cases of young children, while in families with older children their role becomes more unconscious and experiential in connecting and ensuring family memory and strengthening language ideologies. Through their homescapes and through their multilingual familylects, which include shared family multilingual practices (ranging from active translanguaging to separating languages), they *create* the family; they construct a shared family identity based on memory, emotional bonds, cultural and religious ties (Van Mensel 2018). A variety of strategies was shown to enact their FLP, trying to keep languages apart in parent-child interactions, also referred to as poly-monolingualism (Van Mensel 2018), using more fluid multilingual, translanguaging practices, and following children's agentive language choices, especially as they grow up. In all cases, the family is constructed as a safe place where multilingual language repertoires are used freely and according to their needs. Broader monolingual ideological discourses and school language policies are shown to affect their FLP, by creating ideological tensions and dilemmas regarding children's language and academic development (King & Lanza 2019). This is also consistent with previous studies among migrant (Albanian) families in Greece (Gogonas 2009). Their language ideologies are renegotiated and reconceptualised, playing an important role in legitimising and validating multilingual practices and identities. Homescapes provide agency and privacy in enacting families' FLP and framing their identities, at the family and the individual levels (Boivin 2021). Through a variety of materialities, children are exposed to multisensory discourse resources, which sustain and activate the motivation to use and further develop the heritage language. They are linked to spatial and language practices that provide opportunities for identity empowerment, emotional ties, and family memory. Last, at the intersection of the fields of FLP and LL, the present study suggests the potentialities of working in interdisciplinary ways, using innovative, multimodal ethnographic approaches to the study of urban multilingualism, and actively engaging participants as co-ethnographers/homescape ethnographers. Implications for future research may include the use of longitudinal ethnographic research, employing observation and discussions among families and within communities over time.

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