

**Effects of Language Status, Community Advice, and Parent Beliefs on Heritage Language
Maintenance in the U.S.: A Scoping Review**

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Abstract

PURPOSE: This qualitative scoping review examines effects of language status, community advice, and parents' beliefs on heritage-language (HL) maintenance in the U.S.

METHODOLOGY: Twenty-eight articles were included. Data were extracted per Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodology.

DATA AND ANALYSIS: Themes and subthemes were identified via qualitative content analysis.

FINDINGS: HL speakers mostly desired to pass their HL to their children, but faced barriers including limited resources and time due to relatively lower language status of the HL; and incorrect advice from community members.

ORIGINALITY: Results indicate cascading effects of language status, advice from the community, and parents' beliefs on family language policy and therefore HL transmission. To our knowledge, no qualitative scoping review has evaluated how external factors impact family-internal factors to shape HL maintenance in the U.S.

SIGNIFICANCE: Given multifaceted contributions to HL maintenance, community entities must collaborate to support and promote HLs. We hope this review can guide future research and policy and empower communities.

Keywords

bilingualism, heritage languages, language status, language maintenance, early childhood, United States, language ideology, family language policy, parents' beliefs, heritage language maintenance

Introduction

Maintaining bilingualism confers benefits ranging from socioeconomic capital (Mim, 2023) to connection with culture, family (Kang, 2013), and identity (Oh & Fuligni, 2010). We define a U.S. heritage-language (HL) speaker as someone “raised in a home where a non-English language” is spoken or signed, who speaks, signs, or understands the HL and English (Valdés, 2001, p. 27), validating cultural connections to HLs amidst varying proficiency levels (Tesser et al., 2003). Groups with HLs include immigrants; Deaf families who sign (who report common experiences with other HL communities; Mitchiner, 2015); and Indigenous communities.

In the United States, the percentage of people using non-English languages increased 52% from 2000-2019, to 22% of the population. The five most frequently spoken non-English languages (or language groups) are Spanish (or Spanish Creole), dialects of Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese), Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Arabic (Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022). However, the U.S. Census Bureau tracks over 1,000 languages.

For immigrant families, HL proficiency declines precipitously over three generations due to assimilation into mainstream U.S. culture (Grenoble, 2021). Throughout history, assimilation has been encouraged or forced by governmental systems, societal attitudes, and geopolitical events. For example, Japanese internment during World War II suppressed intergenerational transmission of Japanese, as described by Mae Yanagi Ferral: ““It’s sad that we had that language in our family and we lost it. We were not encouraged to speak Japanese... being different was not what our parents wanted us to deal with”” (Ford, 2009, p. 637). For multiple centuries,

dominant U.S. cultural ideology has expected immigrants to assimilate into a ‘melting pot,’ leaving behind cultural backgrounds in favor of homogeneity. There are many issues with this expectation, including the pressure to suppress or shed the family culture, and the fact that members of some groups, e.g., Asian Americans, are perceived as ‘perpetual foreigners’ despite their level of cultural assimilation. Some may view HL loss as ‘becoming American,’ but others experience a loss of culture and identity.

Given the benefits of maintaining HLs, it is vital to identify and disrupt factors causing language loss, which represents loss of culture (Mim, 2023). Recent systematic and scoping reviews have addressed topics like impacts of bilingualism on parent-child relationships (deSouza, Lin, & Cox, 2023) or how migrant families conceptualize family language policy (Bose et al., 2023). To our knowledge, this is the first qualitative scoping review that sets out to examine how external factors (language status, community advice) impact family-internal factors (parent beliefs) to shape HL maintenance.

Below, we introduce three factors impacting HL maintenance, foundational to this study: language status, community advice to parents, and parents’ beliefs about the value of HL maintenance. Numerous prior studies have identified significant contributions of language status and parents’ beliefs to HL maintenance, which informed our interest in these factors. A relatively underresearched but important additional factor is community advice to parents, which can influence parents’ beliefs and thus shape their family language policies, impacting HL maintenance (see, e.g., Yu, 2013). We conjectured that community advice was likely itself to reflect the broader status of a language in society. Thus, this review aimed to situate community advice within a cascade of factors affecting HL maintenance: starting first with language status, at the societal level.

Factors Impacting HL Maintenance

Language Status

A language's status in society represents its perceived power and prestige (Kasstan, Auer, & Salmons, 2018) relative to other community languages. The status of a language is a strong predictor of whether or not it will be successfully maintained and transmitted across generations (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020). A robust number of prior studies from across the globe (e.g., Huang & Liao, 2023; Borland, 2005) have established strong links between language status and HL maintenance (for a review, see O'Brien & Willenberg, 2023). For the purposes of this review, we employ a comprehensive definition of language status, considering how relative differences in languages' power and prestige manifest across a wide array of community settings and structural and societal dynamics. Governmental language policies can both reflect and exacerbate relative differences in language status (Chua, 2010). For example, in 1966, the Singaporean government mandated English learning in schools from an early age, which has reduced Mandarin Chinese proficiency among the ethnically Chinese population (Ng, 2014).

While the U.S. has not historically had an official language, English dominates in public spaces, educational spaces, and media. Policies and practices in the education system and health and medical fields privilege English. For example, in speech-language pathology, roughly 8% of speech-language pathologists are multilingual providers (ASHA, 2021), an inadequate number to serve the 22% of the population speaking a language other than English (Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022). As a result, services for children with disabilities affecting speech and language often over-emphasize children's English acquisition and underemphasize their HL development. These and many other structural and societal factors minoritize HLs, simultaneously reflecting and exacerbating their low language status relative to English, and creating challenges for prioritizing

children's HL learning (e.g., Li & Renn, 2018). Families speaking HLs may experience linguicism (linguistically based racism), an outlet for racist or xenophobic attitudes whose more overt expressions are less socially acceptable (DeGraff, 2019). On the other hand, community resources and support empower parents to transmit the HL (Nesturuk, 2010). Heritage schools, cultural programs, and public institutions can counterbalance the pressures of the broader English-dominant culture, by legitimizing and supporting HL use in domains outside the home (Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001; Borland, 2005; Hornberger, 2005). This review focuses not solely on impacts of language status on HL maintenance, but on how language status shapes community advice and parents' beliefs, and impacts HL maintenance via that cascade.

Community Advice

A small but compelling set of studies reports that professionals, including (among others) pediatricians, teachers, and speech-language pathologists, sometimes advise non-English-speaking or bilingual parents of disabled and neurodivergent children to speak English or to use a single language in the home (e.g., Yu, 2016, 2018; Howard et al., 2019; Hampton et al., 2017). Such advice likely reflects the privileged status of English in society, and the minoritized language status of HLs. For example, most speech-language pathologists are monolingual English speakers (ASHA, 2021) who are likely inadequately trained and qualified to provide speech and language intervention in the HL, so they may believe that exposure to English at home will best equip children to access English-language services. Likewise, teachers may believe that exposure to English at home will best prepare children to access English-language school environments. Monolingual English-speaking providers may also believe pervasive myths about multilingualism, including subtractive views that multiple

languages compete and confuse children, especially those with disabilities affecting language (Hampton et al., 2017). In fact, research evidence indicates that bilingualism is not a cognitive or linguistic risk factor (Genesee, 2015; Peristeri et al., 2021; Peña et al., 2018), and so disabled and neurodivergent children's access to their HL should not be restricted. Emphasizing English in their home language input can isolate children from social and cultural activities in the community and limit meaningful interaction with family members (Hampton et al., 2017).

Parents view health, medical, or educational providers as experts, even if they have minimal training in language development. Yu and others have reported professionals' advice to parents can influence parents' beliefs about the importance of prioritizing the HL, and/or can shape their family language policies, impacting HL maintenance (e.g., Yu, 2013; Howard et al., 2019). Thus, this review aimed to situate community advice within a cascade of factors affecting HL maintenance. We focus more broadly on 'community advice' to parents rather than narrowly on advice from professionals, because we suspect that parents also rely on advice from other community members, such as family and friends, in forming their beliefs and attitudes toward the HL. One goal of the review was to determine how extensively qualitative research has documented effects of community advice from different types of community members (professionals vs. friends and family) on parents' beliefs, family language policies, and HL maintenance. We suspected this topic is underresearched.

Parents' Beliefs

Parents play a vital role in language acquisition, so their attitudes and beliefs about an HL may determine whether it is transmitted to children (Spolsky, 2012). As the most immediate and influential figures in a child's life, much of the responsibility of HL maintenance falls on parents

(Ahooja et al., 2022). They make decisions about which language(s) to use at home, how consistently they are used, and what attitudes are communicated toward the HL (Gharibi & Mirvahedi, 2021). When parents value and prioritize the HL, they are more likely to provide resources, opportunities, and reinforcement for its use (Makarova, Terekhova, & Mousavi, 2017). Conversely, if parents adopt subtractive or deficit-oriented views of bilingualism, they may reduce the presence of the HL at home, accelerating language shift (Li & Renn, 2018). Since parents often serve as gatekeepers to intergenerational language transmission, their beliefs can either sustain or hinder HL vitality (Liao & Huang, 2020). At the same time, parents can value HL maintenance but still not overcome the pressures of English-dominant mainstream society (and relatively low language status of the HL; Berardi-Wiltshire, 2017). Thus, beliefs are most likely to influence HL maintenance through the mediating factor (Ronderos et al., 2021) of family language policy (FLP): rules and routines that govern the child's daily linguistic environment (King & Fogle, 2017; see also Kaveh, 2018). This review is particularly interested in how external factors like societal valuation of the HL; community resources; and advice from professionals, friends, and family all likely influence parents' beliefs and language choices. While parents are critical determiners of HL maintenance, their ideology and choices do not develop in isolation, but instead are deeply embedded in sociocultural contexts (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020; Gruszczyńska-Thompson, 2019).

Research Questions

Three Research Questions (RQs) guide this review:

RQ1. What is the nature of the relationship between an HL's status in society and language maintenance across generations?

RQ2. To what extent does information parents receive from community members (e.g., health professionals, teachers, friends, and family members) influence their beliefs about passing their HL to their children?

RQ3. How do parents' beliefs about impacts of HLs on academic, social, and career success influence the degree to which they pass HLs to their children?

Methods

The research team included two 2nd-or-3rd-generation undergraduate-honors students with differing HL backgrounds –centering HL communities as stakeholders and diversifying representation in research (Summer et al., 2023; Jolivéte, 2015). One student author is a 2nd-generation, bilingual English-Spanish speaker who has learned their family's HL (Spanish) through public school, and the other student author is a 3rd-generation, monolingual English speaker with grandparents that speak Khmer (Cambodian HL). The senior author is a bilingual English-Spanish speaker, whose family's HLs (German, Norwegian, Irish) have been lost over generations.

Scoping-Review Framework

This scoping review was performed in accordance with JBI methodology (Pollock et al., 2022), the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR; Tricco et al., 2018), and guidelines from Arksey and O'Malley (2005). A scoping-review was performed rather than a systematic-review as systematic reviews are better suited to answering “questions addressing the feasibility, appropriateness, meaningfulness or effectiveness of a certain treatment or practice,” whereas scoping reviews are

more suited to answering broad questions, mapping the extent of the literature and identifying gaps (Munn et al., 2018, p. 3). Thus, scoping-review methodology aligned well with the objectives of the current study.

Study-Selection Process

EBSCOhost, PsycINFO, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts, Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses A&I, and Web of Science databases were searched using these keywords in varying combinations: bilingual*, multilingual*, heritage language*, caregiver/parent beliefs/attitudes, language status/maintenance/attrition, early childhood, multiple languages. **Figure 1** illustrates the screening process. Titles and abstracts of unique results were screened using the inclusion criteria below. Twenty-eight articles were retained: 17 journal articles, 10 dissertations/theses, and 1 conference paper.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Peer-reviewed, English-language journals or grey literature (conference papers, Master's and doctoral theses/dissertations) for which full text was available;
2. Original studies (not reviews);
3. Families used non-English home languages (mono/bi/multilingually), in the U.S., with children 0-18;
4. Parent/caregiver perspectives on children's language development
5. Outcomes related to 1 or more RQs;
6. Qualitative measures (for mixed-methods studies, only qualitative portions were coded);
7. Published between 2005 and August, 2023 (when searches were concluded)

8. Minimum 10 parents/caregivers or 5 families (with mixtures of single- and multi-caregiver participation).

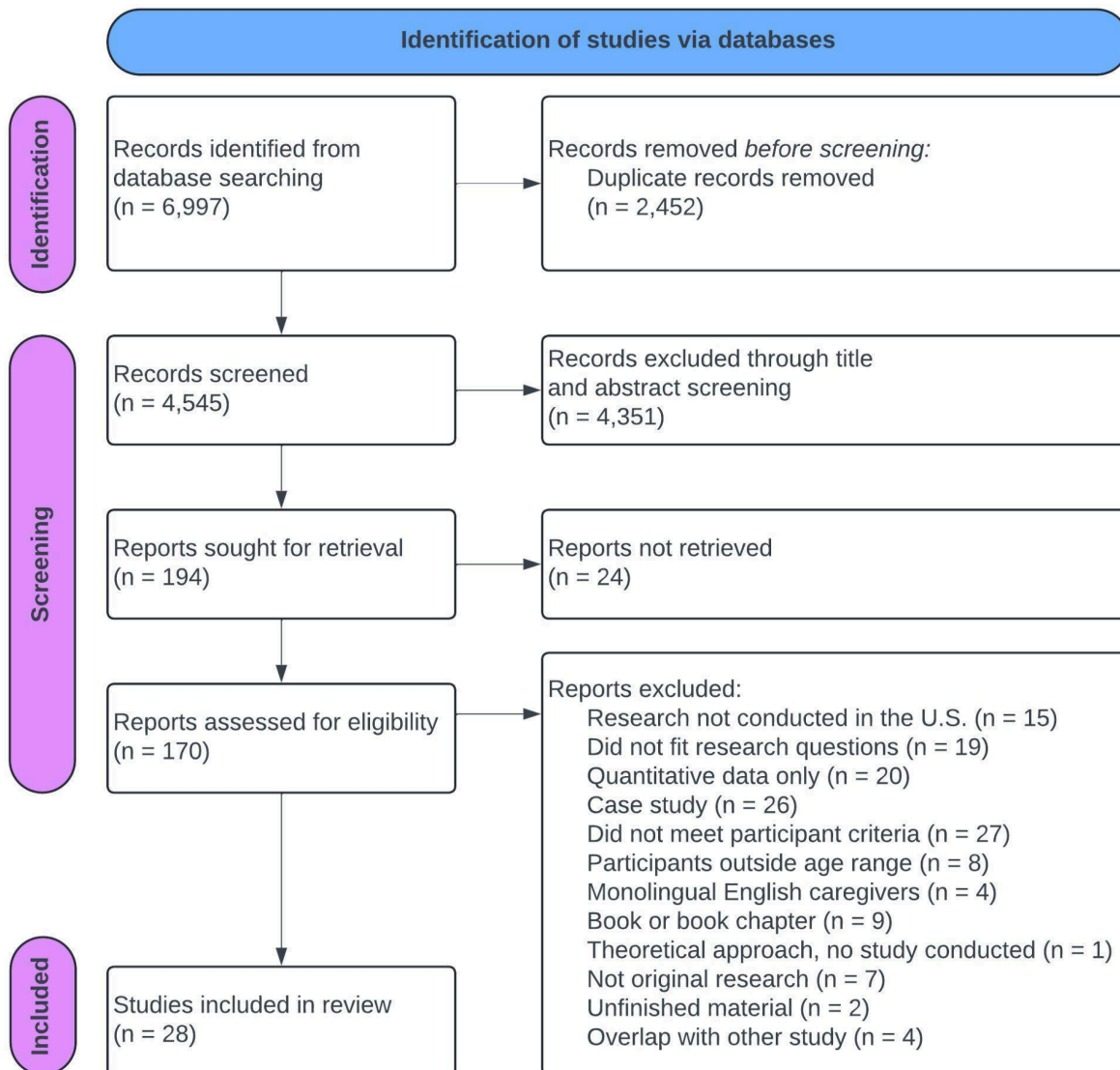


Figure 1. PRISMA-ScR Flowchart Depicting Article-Screening Process (Tricco et al., 2018).

Data Analysis

Qualitative-Coding Procedures

Qualitative coding used Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) through Taguette (Rampin & Rampin, 2021). Inductive coding, also referred to as ‘bottom-up’ coding, draws the preliminary code set from the patterns in the data. The initial bottom-up pilot coding was completed using one article, Yu (2013), from the 28 identified papers. This paper was chosen for the pilot coding as the initial screening indicated it spoke to all three RQs, suggesting it was likely to generate a comprehensive set of codes. Then, this set of codes was applied to the dataset in a deductive process. Following deductive alignment with RQs, which consisted of unitizing the initial code set of 20 codes in a clearly defined and mutually exclusive way to enhance intercoder reliability (Campbell et al., 2013), 11 codes were retained (see Appendix A). Pairwise inter-rater reliability (Campbell et al., 2013) reached 70% after three articles. In articles interviewing children or teachers, only parent/grandparent/caregiver interviews were coded, in alignment with RQs.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) is the preferred methodology for going beyond basic descriptive analysis (Pollock et al., 2022), as was necessary to examine concepts and themes and identify gaps in the literature. Analyses are modeled on Papoudi et al. (2021), in that data were organized into themes and subthemes after codes were exported to Excel (Microsoft, 2018). The faculty co-author reviewed the data and corrected errors. The three themes directly corresponded to the three RQs. Nine subthemes tracked interactions between the three factors corresponding to the RQs—language status, community advice, and parents’

beliefs—and a fourth factor, family language policy (identified inductively). Also, direct impacts of each factor on HL maintenance were tracked. The subthemes were trimmed to the set of nine based on the links between factors that emerged in the dataset.

Results

Over 20 HL groups were represented in the dataset. Over half the articles included Spanish, Chinese dialects, or Korean (sometimes alongside other languages), which are among the most prevalent U.S. languages (Nagano, 2015). The majority of participants were mothers. Children and teachers were recruited in some studies, but the review focused on parent/grandparent/caregiver perspectives. Sample sizes ranged from 5 families to over 100 parents. A data-extraction chart was used to summarize and track individual studies throughout the analysis process (Pollock et al., 2022) and is available in *Supplemental Materials* (see **Table S1**).

Table 1 reports themes and subthemes used during qualitative content analysis to group the data for analysis (with number of instances of each subtheme). In the below sections, results are reported using roughly the same organization. The first section addresses an additional topic that was not captured directly in the coding and analysis process, but which is nevertheless important to address: impacts of language status on community advice.

Table 1: Themes and Subthemes Used to Group Data.

Theme	Subtheme (with number of instances)
1. Effects of language status	a. Language status affects parents' beliefs (7) b. Language status affects family language policies (34) c. Language status affects HL maintenance (67)
2. Effects of community advice	a. Community advice affects parents' beliefs (16) b. Community advice affects family language policies (24) c. Community advice affects HL maintenance (3)
3. Effects of parents' beliefs	a. Parents' beliefs affect family language policies (125) b. Parents' beliefs affect HL maintenance (3) c. Family language policies affect maintenance (20)

Effects of Language Status

Language Status Affects Community Advice

Effects of language status on community advice to parents were not separable in this dataset from effects of advice on other factors, which are described in later sections. However, of 43 cases where advice shaped other factors, 30 (70%) represented advice to emphasize English, e.g., as the language of school, or of disability services (see **Figure 2**). Thus, community perceptions of English as higher status than the HL seem to shape the advice given to parents.

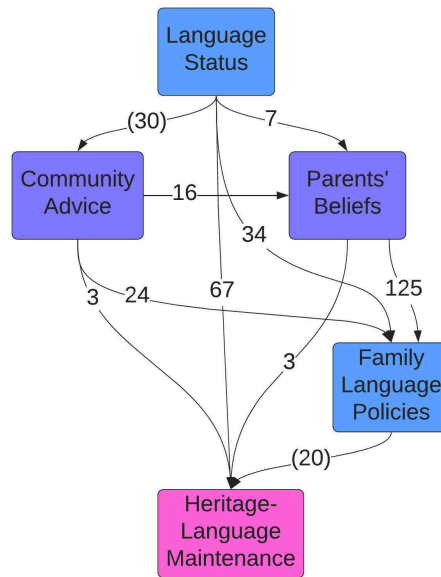


Figure 2: Cascade of Factors Impacting HL Maintenance. Arrows indicate how factors interconnect. Numbers reflect instances of each link in the dataset. Effects of language status on community advice were implied in the nature of advice. Effects of family language policies on HL maintenance are likely undercounted.

Language Status Affects Parents' Beliefs

In seven instances, language status affected parents' beliefs. Many parents internalized the notion that English is the most important language, given its high status and dominance at school (Zhu, Hopper, & Kulaixi, 2020). Parents of autistic children¹ viewed English, but not Chinese, as linguistic capital helpful for accessing treatment (Yu, 2013). Deaf parents sought cochlear implants for their children to promote access to mainstream society and avoid oppression and discrimination, which they had experienced in English-dominant communities and workplaces (Mitchiner, 2015). However, some parents responded to discrimination with renewed belief in the value of the HL (““this shouldn’t be, because it’s like racism. We are in this

¹ Writers make choices regarding terminology for disability or neurodivergence. We use identity-first language (“autistic children”), in accordance with preferences of some members of the autistic community (Botha et al., 2021).

country, [they should] respect our language”’; Reese & Goldenberg, 2006, p. 54). For multilingual immigrant families, parents were sensitive to relative language status of HLs, recognizing Spanish as more valuable than Zapoteco (Morales, 2016), or Mandarin as more valuable than Fujianese (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

Language Status Affects Family Language Policies

In 34 instances, language status directly affected family language policies, in ways that were both supportive and suppressive of HL use. Language status was supportive when there was an HL community nearby and parents sought out cultural events where children would be exposed to the HL (Inan, 2021; Szilagyi & Szeci, 2020; Taliancich-Klinger & Gonzalez, 2019; Ijalba, 2016). Parents also sought out language-immersion programs in the HL (Surrain, 2021).

More often, prevalence of English in society and school impinged on parents’ efforts to promote HL maintenance (Jocelyn, 2022; Lee & Gupta, 2020; Raimbekova, 2021; Scott, 2011). It was difficult to find time for HL instruction at home after demanding daily schedules (Scott, 2011). Parents’ ability to promote the HL was dependent on their proximity to community geographical ‘hubs’ (Szilagyi & Szeci, 2020) such as Texas for the Spanish-speaking community (Li & Renn, 2018). Within Texas, parents in the Rio Grand Valley, close to Mexico, were more likely to decide to pass on the HL than parents in central Texas (Taliancich-Klinger & Gonzalez, 2019). There was not always an HL community nearby (Inan, 2021)--e.g., one parent bemoaned the lack of a Turkish community in Wisconsin (Ijalba, 2016). Parents complained of limited or outdated resources for supporting HL learning, e.g., lack of appropriate HL books (Reese & Goldenberg, 2006; Meini Meybodi, 2014).

Language status caused some parents to prioritize English. Haitian-American parents brought up concerns about stigma and trauma associated with Haitian identity and the creole language (Jocelyn, 2022). Deaf parents made the choice to proceed with cochlear implantation because it represented access to spoken English, and promoting English was necessary for survival and success (Mitchiner, 2015; see also Yu, 2013). Parents felt implicit pressure to prepare autistic children for English-language therapies (Ijalba, 2016).

Language Status Affects HL Maintenance

In 67 instances, parents reported that factors related to language status impacted children's HL maintenance. Several were overlapping with impacts on family language policies (see last section): access to an HL community (Moeini Meybodi, 2014; Morales, 2016), or living in a geographic area where the HL is widely used (Taliancich-Klinger & Gonzalez, 2019), facilitated maintenance. Prevalence of English (Reese & Goldenberg, 2006; Zhu et al., 2020) and lack of access to an HL community (Lee & Gupta, 2020; Jocelyn, 2022) inhibited maintenance. Tigert (2017) highlighted the negative impact, on both parents and the language school, of being a small linguistic minority community (Finnish) within a broader English-dominant culture.

Two aspects of language status were more uniquely linked to HL maintenance. First, experiences with xenophobia, discrimination, or marginalization were reported to impede children's HL maintenance directly. Inan (2021) suggested that when children witness their parents experiencing discrimination, they may associate the HL with discrimination and feel reduced motivation to maintain the HL. Children also experience discrimination themselves; as one parent described, “my oldest daughter, she didn't want to speak Spanish anymore because her daycare friends would tell her that she spoke funny...she wanted to fit in”

(Taliancich-Klinger & Gonzalez, 2019, p. 1548; see also Surrain, 2021). Parents reported that children were embarrassed to speak the HL in public, impeding HL maintenance (Scott, 2011).

Second, many parents bemoaned the negative impacts of English-language school on HL maintenance. Children's HL proficiency decreased after entering preschool (Wu, 2005; Inan, 2021), causing some parents to regret enrolling (Ikar, 2018). In school-age, school, after-school programs, homework, and social interaction with classmates reinforced English (Wu, 2005; Tigert, 2017; Ijalba, 2016; Li & Renn, 2018; Ikar, 2018). Parents were frustrated with lack of availability of language-immersion programs in the HL (Li & Renn, 2018; Surrain, 2021). Deaf parents could not find educational programs that emphasized both ASL and English (Mitchiner, 2015). Parents of autistic children could only find therapy programs in English, and language immersion and disability services were segregated in the school system (Yu, 2013).

Effects of Community Advice

Community Advice Affects Parents' Beliefs

In 16 cases, parents reported that advice from professionals, family, or friends had shaped their beliefs on HL maintenance. Some professionals supported bilingualism, e.g., reassuring concerned parents that their children would gradually learn English in school (Inan, 2021), or advising them to continue speaking Spanish even if children responded in English (Scott, 2011), which motivated parents to continue speaking the HL. Others advised emphasizing English (Ijalba, 2016; Yu, 2013) or a single language (Jocelyn, 2022), particularly to parents of children with disabilities affecting language. For some parents, this advice validated their existing beliefs (Yu, 2013), but for parents with limited English proficiency (Yu, 2013) it provoked guilt and feelings of inadequacy (Ijalba, 2016). Some parents resisted advice (Scott, 2011), e.g., a Deaf

parent, whose mother said to emphasize English but whose Deaf friends questioned the choice of a cochlear implant, concluded ““You cannot make everybody happy!”” (Mitchiner, 2015, p. 60).

Community Advice Affects Family Language Policies

There were 24 cases in which community advice shaped the family language policies parents enacted. Only one of these cases was in support of bilingualism, where a teacher allowed reading at home to be in any language, supporting a family’s desire to support Finnish literacy development (Tigert, 2017). Professionals primarily advised parents—particularly those with children with disabilities or neurodivergence—to speak English at home, despite parents’ limited English proficiency. This advice limited HL maintenance and socialization and cultural transmission (Yu, 2013). Parents reported they did not receive information or help with changing home language input to English (Yu, 2013). As a result, some parents stopped talking and relied on the TV for language input (Ijalba, 2016). Other parents were advised to avoid bilingual schooling and enroll in English-only school (Blanc et al., 2022).

Some parents resisted advice to emphasize English or speak one language. Parents resisted by telling professionals ““too bad!”” (Mitchiner, 2015, p. 58) and continuing to use the HL (Jocelyn, 2022), having only one parent change to English (Blanc et al., 2022), adjusting implementation, or giving up after finding that English wasn’t working (Yu, 2013). Advice was most successful when it aligned with families’ pre-existing language preferences (Yu, 2013).

Community Advice Affects HL Maintenance

There were only three instances in which effects of community advice on children’s language development were explicitly described. One parent described a friend’s experience: her

children's school convinced her to limit English exposure in the home despite her limited proficiency, and as teenagers the children's Spanish was "all mixed up" (Surrain, 2021, p. 1169). Another parent shared that her child's speech-language pathologist (SLP) told her to speak English or her child would "stay behind." The SLP also conducted the child's speech-language therapy only in English. Of the child's English-language development, the parent said "it is difficult for her, she learns and then forgets" (Ijalba, 2016, p. 208). Jocelyn (2022) reported that one mother's family and friends recommended she speak only one language to reduce confusion, after which her child began speaking only English.

Effects of Parents' Beliefs

Parents' Beliefs Affect Family Language Policies

In 125 cases, parents' beliefs impacted family language policies. Parents valued bilingualism for family cohesion, cultural identity development, connection with the heritage country, career opportunities, and building a strong foundation for English and literacy. These beliefs motivated parents to use the HL at home (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; Raimbekova, 2021; Mitchiner, 2015; Lee & Gupta, 2020; Kang, 2013)—sometimes exclusively (Tigert, 2017; Szilagyi & Szecsi, 2020)—and to read HL books to children (Tigert, 2017; Taliancich-Klinger & Gonzalez, 2019). Language efforts were motivated by a goal of proficient bilingualism (Inan, 2021). Parents' belief in the value of bilingualism led them to send children to HL school (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009) and plan trips to the heritage country (Kang, 2013; Martins, 2006).

Positive beliefs about the importance of HL literacy shaped practices. Parents designed activities to foster HL reading and writing at home (Lee & Gupta, 2020), including reading aloud

in the HL (Tigert, 2017). They sought out dual-language programs to ensure HL literacy development (Surrain, 2021; but see Seo, 2017; Wu, 2005).

Parents, regardless of gender, believed it was their job to promote HL development (Inan, 2021; Ikar, 2018; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009), or even to enforce an HL-only policy (Ikar, 2018). Grandparents viewed HL transmission as their job, and naturally immersed grandchildren in the HL (Zhu, Hopper, & Kulaixi, 2020). Parents conveyed the importance of the HL by modeling HL use (Ikar, 2018) and giving advice to children (Inan, 2021; Jia, 2006; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; Morales, 2016). If there were no school-based programs or supports available, parents assumed full responsibility for HL development (Surrain, 2021). Concerns that language mixing could lead to English dominance (Tigert, 2017), or confusion, led some to use only one language at a time (Inan, 2021) or exclusively use the HL (Szilagyi & Szecsi, 2020).

While the majority of parents expressed positive beliefs about bilingualism, there were a few counter-examples. First, a few parents used the HL due not to beliefs in its value, but to convenience, given their own limited English proficiency (Zhu et al., 2020). Second, parents' positive beliefs did not always translate into HL use (Dosch, 2021). Sometimes this was due to choices to emphasize English for academic achievement (Li & Renn, 2018). Other times it was due to practical challenges, e.g., parents' own limited HL proficiency (Surrain, 2021), presence of an English-monolingual parent (Tigert, 2017), or limitations of the home environment, which may lend itself to basic, "household" vocabulary vs. academic vocabulary (Shifrina-Piljovin, 2009, p. 98). Sometimes English was easier to use, e.g., when children were responding in English (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009) or needed help with English-language homework (Tigert, 2017). Many parents adopted an easy-going approach, hesitant to enforce strict HL-only policies that might erode children's self-motivation, create conflicts, reduce trust, or impair

parent-child communication (Ikar, 2018; Szilagyi & Szecsi, 2020). These parents consequently used more English (Dosch, 2021), and allowed children to respond or speak to siblings in English (Inan, 2021; Surrain, 2021). Some parents allowed English-language media (e.g., video games), not conceptualizing media as language-learning opportunities (Tigert, 2017).

A few parents reported concerns about intersections of bilingualism and disability or neurodivergence. Parents of autistic children de-emphasized the HL if they believed it would be an obstacle to services or that bilingualism was causing language delays (Yu, 2013; see also Jocelyn, 2022). Parents' perceptions of status/prestige of the HL relative to English shaped language choices (Reese & Goldenberg, 2006; see also Jocelyn, 2022). However, access to information about developmental trajectories in autism and support strategies empowered parents to re-emphasize the HL, confident that they could meet children's needs (Yu, 2013).

Parents' Beliefs Affect HL Maintenance

There were three instances where parents' beliefs were linked to HL maintenance. Wu (2005) reported that children of parents who affirmed the value of preserving the HL were more likely to maintain proficiency. Deaf parents' goal of raising bilingual children was based on beliefs in the benefits of ASL-English bilingualism (e.g., career opportunities), and one parent said their daughter was meeting the goal (Mitchiner, 2015). Another parent described conversations in which they advocated the benefits of multilingualism to their own children and reported that the child "started to understand." The parent also instructed the teacher to speak in Spanish to the child, which would presumably support maintenance (Surrain, 2021).

Family Language Policies Affect HL Maintenance

The link between family language policies and HL maintenance was outside the scope of our RQs, which focused on language status, community advice, and parents' beliefs. However, the link between parents' beliefs and HL maintenance would be expected to be mediated by family language policies. Thus, we included the subtheme 'family language policies affect HL maintenance.' Twenty instances were observed, but this is almost certainly an undercount.

Some parents shared examples of family language policies leading to HL loss, e.g., when the primary caregiver preferred speaking English (Moeini Meybodi, 2014; Taliancich-Klinger & Gonzalez, 2019) or allowed children to respond in English (Surrain, 2021). Even parents who had a rule requiring children to speak the HL sometimes reported that children ignored the rule (Ikar, 2018). Family language policies were positively linked with HL maintenance when parents (Morales, 2016) and grandparents spoke the HL (Taliancich-Klinger & Gonzalez, 2019; Seo, 2017). Parents' choices to seek out HL-language community activities (e.g., Korean church), avoid English-language preschool (Ikar, 2018), and travel to the heritage country (Seo, 2017; Kang, 2013) supported HL development. Early consistency paid off in HL proficiency, even if parents, over time, loosened policies requiring children to speak the HL at home (Ikar, 2018).

Discussion

This qualitative scoping review collated evidence that language status, community advice, and parents' beliefs cascade to influence HL transmission (often by way of family language policies). Across language groups, parents generally desired to pass their HL to their children, but faced barriers including limited resources, support, and time due to relatively lower

language status; and inaccurate advice from professionals, family, and friends, particularly to parents of neurodivergent children or children with disabilities.

The model in **Figure 2** captures the interrelatedness between factors. Numbers reflect instances of each link in the dataset. Similar to Curdt-Christiansen & Huang's (2020) model of Family Language Policy, our results demonstrate how both internal and external factors interact with each other to create a complex network of impacts on HL maintenance. Our model is unique in characterizing the cascade through which language status influences community advice to parents; which in turn influences parents' beliefs; which shape family language policy and hence affect HL maintenance. In particular, we identify community advice as a particularly underresearched, but important, intermediate factor through which language status influences parents' beliefs and family language policy. The sequence just described is not the only route by which we find that these factors affect HL maintenance. Still, understanding how these factors can be situated within a sequence can help to inform targeted interventions to promote HL maintenance.

Gaps in the Literature

One goal of this review was to identify gaps in need of further research. One gap we identified is underrepresentation of Indigenous languages. One article focused on Zapoteco as an immigrant language (Morales, 2016), but none focused on languages of tribal communities in the United States. We hope future studies will use participatory-research approaches to center Indigenous languages, many of which are being revitalized (Briggs-Cloud, 2020; Wampanoag Language Reclamation Project, 2024; Bark, 2022). Minoritized dialects such as African American English are not often centered in work on HL maintenance (Anderson, 2023). For families speaking 3+ languages, language status can differ between home language/dialects (e.g.,

Fujianese) and majority languages (Mandarin) of countries of origin (Zang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). These complexities should be further explored. Recruiting larger samples comprising diverse participant gender and socioeconomic backgrounds would also promote generalizability.

The study confirmed our initial suspicions that impacts of community advice (RQ2) are underreported compared with language status (RQ1) or parents' beliefs (RQ3; see **Table 1** and **Figure 2**). While community advice to parents was relatively infrequent in the dataset, we believe (based partly on anecdotal experience) that this is less a reflection of its rarity and more an indication that it is an understudied topic. This is a consequential gap in the literature, because the evidence we do have suggests that community advice to parents has a significant impact on families. In particular, disabled and neurodivergent children are at disproportionately higher risk of HL loss, due partly to advice from professionals that parents emphasize English or use one language in the home (Yu, 2016, 2018; Howard et al., 2019). Such advice does not align with best practices. Research evidence indicates that bilingual input does not put disabled and neurodivergent children at risk of lower language-learning outcomes (Genessee, 2015). In fact, disabled and neurodivergent children may actually benefit cognitively (Peristeri et al., 2021) and linguistically (Peña et al., 2018) from being bilingual.

Conclusion

Maintaining proficiency in home languages promotes child well-being, fosters parent-child communication, and strengthens cultural connections (Müller et al., 2020). One important implication of identifying impacts of community advice on parents' beliefs and on HL maintenance is that parents are not solely responsible for HL maintenance. Comprehensive structural changes are needed across society to sustain cultural and linguistic diversity. In fields

like education, communication sciences and disorders, and developmental psychology, subtractive views of bilingualism perpetuate deficits-based characterizations of parent-child language interactions in diverse communities (Avineri et al., 2015). Programs, policies, and research on child language development should capitalize on community strengths (Quam & Roberts, 2023), honoring diversity and inspiring new avenues for HL revitalization and maintenance (Briggs-Cloud, 2020; Chiblow & Meighan, 2022; Bright et al., 2019). For example, interventions educating health professionals and educators about bilingualism and HL maintenance—and their value for disabled and neurodivergent children—could start a positive cascade that would promote HL transmission. We hope this review guides future research, policy development, and community empowerment regarding how HLs can be sustained across generations.

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Ethical Considerations

No new participants were recruited for this scoping review, so human-subjects regulations did not apply.

Consent to Participate

Not applicable.

Consent for Publication

Not applicable.

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Note

1. Writers make choices regarding terminology for disability or neurodivergence. We use identity-first language (“autistic children”), in accordance with the preferences of some members of the autistic community (Botha et al., 2021).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Details of Code Set. Each code is linked to components of RQs. Instances are individual sections of articles addressing each RQ, summed across articles.

Qualitative Codes (With Corresponding RQs)	Description	Example	Instances
Language Status (RQ 1.1)	How HL relates to dominant language (English)	“The geographical location of the family determined their access to Hungarian communities” (Szilagyi & Szecsi, 2020).	28
Status Affects Maintenance (RQ 1.2)	How a language's status affects its maintenance and/or other factors (i.e., parents' beliefs, parent language choices); may include how a language's prevalence in the region or community impacts maintenance	“The location where she lives has made it easy to continue to use Spanish” (Taliancich-Klinger & Gonzales, 2021).	93
Advice from Professionals (RQ 2.1)	Information, opinions, or advice regarding language given to parents from professionals (i.e., speech-language pathologists, medical professionals, educators)	“13 mothers reported that they were explicitly advised to speak English at home with their children...Early intervention SLPs advised two families to only speak English” (Ijalba, 2016).	15
Professional Impacts (RQ 2.2)	How information, opinions, or advice from professionals impacts parents' perceptions and beliefs toward HLs or bilingualism and/or their language choices	““They all asked us to speak English with our child...I...felt really inadequate. I couldn't help my son because my English was not good enough. So I felt bad”” (Yu, 2013)	32
Advice from Family/Friends (RQ 2.3)	Information, opinions, or advice given to parents from family and/or friends	“Mehmet prefers to look for any possible advice from immigrant parents who have older bilingual children in the U.S. This is called ‘social support’ or ‘looking for social support’” (Inan, 2021)	6
Family/Friends' Impacts (RQ 2.4)	How information, opinions, advice from family and/or friends impacts parents' perceptions and beliefs toward HLs or bilingualism	“Family members and friends also encouraged her to use one language to avoid confusion. As a result, Emma began speaking solely in English” (Jocelyn, 2022).	2
Positive Beliefs (RQ 3.1)	Parents view HL or bilingualism as resulting in positive outcomes realized or perceived (e.g., for cultural identity, sociocultural capital)	“Mandarin parents are convinced that their children growing up in a Chinese-speaking family are at an advantage in terms of language skills, compared with their English-speaking, monolingual peers.” (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).	198
Negative Beliefs (RQ 3.2)	Parents view HL or bilingualism as resulting in negative outcomes realized or perceived (e.g., confuses child, delays language development)	““Speaking Somali better than English will create a problem because they need to speak both well. If the children refuse to speak English, they will have a big problem in terms of school and work”” (Ikar, 2018).	30
Parent Language	How parents and caregivers make decisions around language use and language interventions within and	““My house is a Korean island in the U.S. territory. We speak Korean all the time and eat Korean food all the time. I tell my daughters to	190

Choice (RQ 3.3)	outside the home; may also apply to the relationship between beliefs and choice (e.g., Family Language Policy, codeswitching, language mixing)	maintain the Korean customs and culture” (Kang, 2013).	
Language Proficiency and Practices (inductive code)	How language proficiency of parents, children, and/or other family members in HL or English impacts communication; includes other family language practices; may include other family members (e.g., grandparents’) use of HL, which may indirectly impact child proficiency	“Anna explained why she would switch to English when her American husband, who understood a limited amount of Finnish, was a participant in the conversation: ... ‘I want my spouse to understand what I say to the kids’” (Tigert, 2017).	90
Language Maintenance or Loss (inductive code)	How/whether HLs are preserved over time (text does not mention status, beliefs, or community impact OR text covers multiple factors of maintenance that cannot be broken down textually)	“‘[Zapoteco] is getting lost. We are now few that are still speaking it. Now the generations that come are leaving it to the side. Now they are focusing more on Spanish’” (Morales, 2016).	19
Total			703