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FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA

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LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA INGLESA

Family Language Policy in Paraguay: A Case Study of Three English-Spanish Bilingual Families

Política Lingüística Familiar en Paraguay: Estudio de Caso de Tres Familias Bilingües Inglés-Español

A Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements to obtain the degree of

Bachelor of Arts in the English Language

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Tesina para optar al grado de Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa

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Abstract

In our increasingly globalized world, the recognition of the advantages associated with bilingualism has prompted a growing number of parents to opt for raising bilingual children. Within the realm of bilingual child-rearing, Family Language Policy (FLP) emerges as a critical field of study, as it encompasses all language-related decisions within a family unit. This study delves into the strategies adopted by parents from three different families to foster bilingualism in their children. By employing a qualitative approach and conducting a series of interviews, the research uncovers the bilingual child-rearing strategies employed by these parents. Family 1 adopts the One Parent-One Language approach, Family 2 implements the Minority Language at Home strategy, and Family 3 employs a mixed strategy. Notably, two of the three parents incorporate bilingual discourse strategies, such as code-switching, while the third family does not. Additionally, all three families use media as a tool to reinforce the minority language at home. This study contributes insights into the varied approaches to bilingual child-rearing, shedding light on the nuanced strategies employed by diverse families in promoting bilingualism.

Key words: Family Language Policy, bilingualism, bilingual child-rearing

Dedications

To my grandparents; this is for you.

To my family, for believing in me since day one.

And to me, for having the courage to try.

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And lastly, to my professors: the spark you ignited within me is now a fire that burns stronger than ever. The opportunities, knowledge, and passion you have gifted me will forever live in my heart.

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Chapter I

1. Introduction

Now more than ever, society at large is beginning to appreciate the importance of being bilingual. In a globalized world shaped by interconnectedness, being proficient in two or more languages provides a distinct and valuable advantage. Thus, it is no surprise that an increasing number of parents and caretakers are making the decision of raising bilingual children (Anyanwu, 2023; Lee et al., 2015; Soltanieh, 2014; Wilson, 2020). In a modern context, a large group of parents see bilingualism as a personal and family goal, and they work hard to provide their children with the opportunity to learn a second language since infancy (Kalayci, 2012). Moreover, as migration levels have increased over the past five decades (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021), the number of bilingual and multilingual households worldwide has risen significantly.

When it comes to bilingual families, the role of Family Language Policy (FLP) takes center stage since it delves into the planning of language usage within the home environment (Rose et al., 2023). Parents and caregivers make decisions about language use that, consciously or not, directly affect the language development of their children (Hollebeke et al., 2022). Although the notion of FLP has only recently been formally defined, previous research reviews indicate a global and enthusiastic interest in exploring family language ideology, practice, and management (Schwartz, 2010). As a newly emerging field, FLP can provide valuable insights into bilingual acquisition in children, as well as an understanding of the different factors that shape language behavior (Smith-Christmas, 2016).

Paraguay is no exception when it comes to raising bilingual children. Multilingual contexts are an intrinsic part of the country's identity, as a significant percentage of the non-indigenous population speak an indigenous language, Guarani, in addition to Spanish (Gynan, 2007). As a country with over 10.000 immigrants from non-Spanish speaking countries (*Paraguay - Inmigración 2020*, n.d.), it is possible to infer that hundreds of children are also growing up in multilingual homes. Moreover, many Spanish-speaking parents who are proficient in English may decide to raise English-Spanish bilingual children, as they are aware of the many benefits it brings.

1.1. Statement of the problem

The field of Family Language Policy has the potential to offer invaluable insights into the complex process of bilingual acquisition in children. Furthermore, it can facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the diverse array of factors that influence language behaviors in this context. However, FLP is an understudied field in this country, which is why it is paramount to start doing research on FLP in a Paraguayan context. Extensive studies on FLP have been conducted in numerous countries across the globe, but Paraguay remains an exception with limited research in this area. There is much potential to explore the different strategies parents in Paraguay implement at home to raise multilingual children, especially given the bilingual status of the region. Consequently, it is imperative to start paving the way for further studies regarding FLP in Paraguay.

1.2. Purpose of the study

This study shall focus on English-Spanish bilingualism in Paraguay. Its purpose is to describe, compare, and contrast how three families in Asuncion, Paraguay, are raising their

English-Spanish bilingual children, in the hope of shedding some light on the FLP practices of these multilingual families. The study will describe the measures parents implement in their homes to promote bilingualism, as well as the decisions they make in their familial context to aid the bilingual acquisition process of their children.

1.3. Research Questions

- **Main question**

- What strategies are these three parents implementing to promote their children's English acquisition in a country in which Spanish is the dominant language?

- **Sub-questions**

- How do parents' attitudes towards English and Spanish affect the measures they implement to promote bilingualism?
- How does parents' definition of bilingualism influence the measures they implement to promote bilingualism?
- To what extent does code-switching occur in the participants' children?

1.4. Significance of the study

This study will significantly contribute to the fields of Family Language Policy and sociolinguistics. As FLP is a nascent field of study in Paraguay, research in this area is still somewhat limited. A review of the literature demonstrated there is little to no research regarding FLP on a Paraguayan sample; and, hopefully, this study will become a gateway that shall lead to more research in the aforementioned field within the Paraguayan context. In addition, this case study is designed to shed light on the decisions some parents are making, as well as the strategies they are implementing, in order to encourage bilingualism in their household.

1.5. Limitations, Delimitations, and Ethical Concerns

This study presents some limitations related to the chosen research design: a case study. Drawing definitive cause-and-effect conclusions from case studies is challenging because it is not possible to eliminate other plausible explanations. The extent to which the findings from a case study apply broadly is often uncertain. A case study delves into the actions and behaviors of a single individual, group, or organization, and what is observed in this specific case may or may not be representative of similar entities. While case studies can hint at what might be encountered in comparable situations, additional research is typically required to confirm whether the findings from one study are applicable in other contexts (Simon & Goes, 2013). Moreover, the sample was purposefully selected. Although suitable for the researcher's needs, this sample intentionally and openly favors specific characteristics and does not aim to represent an entire population (Cohen et al., 2007).

Regarding ethical concerns, study participants are protected in myriad ways. Firstly, they provided informed consent. All participants were debriefed about the study, its intention, and its purpose; in addition to a rundown of the interviews they were the subject of. Furthermore, they were made aware of the anonymity of said interviews. Every name, last name, and nickname was purposefully anonymized with the intention of protecting the participants' identities. Additionally, any identifying characteristics, i.e. place of work or name of the school their children attend, was removed. Regarding the recordings and transcripts of the interviews, they remain unpublished and are not available to the public.

Chapter II

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Bilingualism

Bilingualism is a field that has been extensively studied over the years. There are many definitions of what constitutes a bilingual person, as the boundaries of what is and is not bilingualism can be broadened or narrowed according to each person's perceptions and views of the concept. Hoffmann (2014) explains that "the most salient feature of bilingualism is that it is a multi-faceted phenomenon." The concept itself is a rather elusive one, and arriving at a clear consensus of what bilingualism is can be quite difficult. Uriel Weinreich, one of the pioneers of bilingual studies, explains that "the practice of alternately using two languages will be called bilingualism, and the person involved, bilingual" (1967, p. 1). But to what degree does a person need to be proficient in another language to be considered bilingual? A person may be able to understand a second language, but not be able to speak it. Another may be able to utter basic sentences in a second language, but not be proficient enough to hold more in-depth conversations. An individual might be able to understand and speak a second language while being illiterate in it. To some, all of the people in the cases mentioned above might be considered bilingual. To others, they might not. In his 1970 article, William Mackey gives a definition of bilingualism that acknowledges its relativity:

> It seems obvious that if we are to study the phenomenon of bilingualism we are forced to consider it as something entirely relative. We must moreover include the use not only of two languages, but of any number of languages. We shall therefore consider bilingualism as the alternate use of two or more languages by the same individual.

(Mackey, 1968, p. 555)

Therefore, it is possible to say that bilingualism as a concept is a rather difficult one to define. Thus, Steiner et al. suggest that, in order to raise a bilingual child, one of the first and most important steps to take is defining what bilingualism is. This, in turn, will help parents set their own bilingual goals for their families (2008).What matters most is what each individual person considers bilingualism to be, as each family may have different goals when it comes to their children's future. It is important to establish those goals as early as possible, as they will directly translate into measures and strategies that will shape language behavior at home.

For the purposes of this study, I shall use Steiner et al.'s definition of bilingualism, which attempts to be as inclusive as possible: "the ability to speak, read, write, or even understand more than one language" (2008, p. 3).

2.2. Types of bilinguals

Defining the different types of bilingual people, however, becomes a simpler task. It is possible to identify various types according to when during their lives they have acquired a second language.

Monolingual children may become bilingual after being consistently exposed to a second language. If the child is six years old or younger, then it is a case of Early Second Language Acquisition (ESLA; De Houwer, 2011). ESLA children may vary in their language proficiency despite having been exposed to a second language for the same amount of time, as is evidenced by a study conducted by Meisel (2009). The findings suggest that there is substantial variation among children learning English as a second language in terms of how quickly they acquire the ability to speak it. This variability is also particularly evident in a study of three

Turkish-speaking children who began acquiring German in a preschool where only German was spoken (Rothweiler, 2016). After 15 months of exposure to the language, four hours a day, from teachers and other children, one child produced an average of 2.9 words per sentence. Another child averaged 2.4 words, and a third only managed 2 words. In early language acquisition, the average length of utterances serves as an important indicator of the structural complexity of children's speech (Brown, 1973). Therefore, it is evident that despite similar exposure times, these three children displayed varying levels in their language skills (De Hauwer, 2011).

Within Early Second Language Acquisition (ESLA), there is a category of children who have been exposed to two languages simultaneously from birth. This phenomenon is referred to as Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA) (De Hauwer, 2011). Since BFLA children's amount of exposure to both languages coincides with their chronological age, it is logical to assume that their language proficiency would be the same for both languages. Nevertheless, evidence and findings from multiple studies suggest otherwise. The variations among bilingual first language acquisition (BFLA) children are significant. It is possible that a BFLA child might only speak a single language. Steiner et al. (2008, p. 16) refer to this as "passive bilingualism". Alternatively, a BFLA child could speak two languages but with different levels of proficiency. In addition, there might be BFLA children who, as anticipated, demonstrate equal proficiency in both languages (De Houwer, 2009).

De Houwer (2011) explains that children who speak only one language despite hearing two languages at home are more likely to belong to families in which only one parent speaks the minority language at home. However, children who are part of families in which both parents speak the minority language at home have a much higher chance of speaking the two languages. These findings are directly linked to the amount of input the child has of the minority language.

Naturally, if only one parent uses it, the child will be less exposed to it. In such cases, the majority language always prevails. Similarly, those BFLA children who speak one language markedly better than the other tend to receive more input in the minority language than those who simply do not speak it. However, these findings are not absolute, and as it was previously mentioned, there is much variation from child to child.

Steiner et al. (2008, p. 3) add to this discussion and assert that there are few "balanced bilinguals", that is, children who are equally proficient in both languages. The authors also provide a classification for the different types of bilinguals, which shall be used for the purposes of this study.

On the one hand, there are simultaneous bilinguals. These are children who have been exposed to two languages since their birth. The concept of simultaneous bilingualism corresponds to De Houwer's (2011) concept of Bilingual First Language Acquisition. For simultaneous bilinguals who have been exposed to two languages since birth, their brains acquire both languages in the same way a monolingual's brain would acquire a first language. They first utter single words in each language, and then they put words together in each language, to finally advance to more complex sentences in both languages (Steiner et al., 2008).

On the other hand, there are sequential bilinguals. This term refers to children who were exposed to a second language only after they acquired a first one. As monolingual children are exposed to a new language, perhaps in a school setting, they begin to learn basic survival phrases that will help them fulfill their essential needs (Steiner et al., 2008). In actuality, already knowing a first language can be helpful when it comes to learning a second one, as skills from the first one can be transferred to the second one. According to a study conducted by Madriñan (2014, p. 64),

"students who have strong first language skills are able to acquire the second language more easily due to language transfer."

2.3. Family Language Policy

After having discussed bilingualism, its definitions, and its different classifications, it is imperative to move on to another vital concept for this research project. When it comes to language use and language behavior within a family, the concept of Family Language Policy becomes relevant. The role of FLP is critical when it comes to childhood bilingualism (Andritsou & Chatzidimou, 2020). FLP takes the front and center spot, as it represents the foundation on which this study rests upon.

To begin with, it would be advisable to define the term language policy. According to Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, p. xi), "a language policy is a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the societies, group or system." As it becomes clear, it is possible to then infer what family language policy is.

FLP can be defined to be parents' explicit and/or implicit language planning for language use between family members (King et al., 2008). FLP is the same as language policy, only that the former occurs at a family level. Every decision made regarding language use within a family is part of FLP.

As stated by Sposlky (2004), family language policy comprises three fundamental components: language practices, language management or planning and language ideologies. Parents' language ideologies and language views have a profound impact on the outcome of their family's language policies and their children's bilingualism, hence its crucial importance. The very decision of raising a bilingual child in a monolingual society is an FLP decision in and of itself, which is why it is important to first discuss parents' language ideologies. Akgül et al.

(2017) classify parents raising bilingual children into two groups: those who live abroad in a country where their mother tongue is not spoken, and those who live in their own country, where their mother tongue is spoken. Although each group has divergent reasons that led them to the decision of bilingual child rearing, one thing is clear: all of them made a conscious choice. Parents living abroad emphasized external factors, such as living in a different country and globalization. They also recognized the advantages bilingualism would bring to their child, but the decision to raise a bilingual child occurred more organically since speaking their mother tongue at home was something natural to them. On the other hand, parents living in their own country placed more importance on factors related to the child. To them, bilingualism was a tool that would aid in the child's professional development, emphasizing globalization and advancement of their future careers (Akgül et al., 2017). Knowing two languages would help access better job opportunities, and, in turn, allow them to live a more comfortable life.

Author Ruiz Martín (2019) also makes the clear distinction between parents who raise bilingual children by necessity and those who do it by choice. The former are usually people who have emigrated to another country but still decide to keep their native, minority language at home. However, the latter refers to parents who are proficient speakers of the language that is spoken in the county they live in, but who still decide to speak a minority language at home with the sole purpose of bilingual child rearing.

Each group's definition of bilingualism also correlates to the trends of thought mentioned above. Parents living abroad defined bilingualism as the native-like use of both languages, while parents living in their own country generally focused on children's ability to speak, write, understand, and read in two languages (Akgül et al., 2017). As showcased by this study, these two groups of parents came up with slightly different definitions of bilingualism, which in turn

will directly affect the decisions they make to promote bilingualism in their children. Parents living abroad only placed importance on language acquisition, while parents living in their own country focused also on bilingual literacy, aimed towards academic purposes.

Elizabeth Lanza (2007) also emphasizes the importance of parents' ideologies when it comes to the child's early bilingual acquisition. She supports the notion that language behavior is directly influenced by both the attitudes of the environment and the parents. Lanza uses Rumsey's definition, which states that language ideology refers to "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world" (1990, p. 346). However, language ideology does not only refer to language alone, but also the way a message is communicated. It "reflects issues of social and personal identity" (Lanza, 2007, p. 51). Language ideology is manifested in the very way people talk, how they use language, in the choices they make every day. Since this everyday use of language is affected by language attitudes and ideologies, the latter will consequently shape a child's bilingual acquisition. Similarly, De Houwer (1999) points out that parents' own linguistic behavior and practices will be influenced by their attitudes and beliefs. This, in turn, will have an impact on the child's language development. De Houwer also concludes that the best chances for active bilingualism would happen in a household where parents are aware of their own impact on their child's language acquisition and where there is an overall positive attitude towards bilingualism and bilingual practices (1999).

2.4. Family Language Management

As it was mentioned earlier, one of the three elements of family language policy is language management or language planning. Curdt-Christiansen (2012, p. 57) defines language management as "the implicit/explicit and subconscious/deliberate parental involvement and

investment in providing linguistic conditions and context for language learning and literacy development." In this context, language planning activities are influenced by caregivers' past experiences, present considerations of their children's language requirements, and future aspirations. This, of course, ties back to parents' own definitions of bilingualism and their goals regarding their children's bilingual behavior.

Spolsky (2007, p. 429) also provides a definition: "Family language management refers to efforts to control the language of family members, especially children." It starts with the parents' decision about what language they are going to use with their children. This initial decision is considered to be a crucial factor in L1 retention.

There are two main categories that comprise Family Language Management (FLM). There is the internal control of FLM, which refers to the choices parents make when it comes to deciding which language they speak in parent-child interactions. Internal control also includes discourse strategies that parents adopt when interacting with their children and home literacy practices. External control of FLM, on the other hand, refers to the parents' agency when it comes to looking for spaces outside of their homes that promote children's minority language maintenance and biliteracy (Schwartz, 2010).

When it comes to internal control of FLM, it is imperative to mention the different language strategies that families can adopt. In her book, Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert (2004) identifies seven of such strategies for language use within the family. They are:

(1) One Parent-One Language – ML (majority-language is strongest).

(2) One Parent-One Language – mL (support for minority-language).

(3) Minority-Language at Home (mL@H).

(4) Trilingual or multilingual strategy.

(5) Mixed strategy.

(6) Time and Place strategy.

(7) Artificial or 'Non-Native' strategy.

For families with two languages, there is a range of four options that can occur. The first one happens when parents have different native languages, and one of the parents' mother tongue is the majority language spoken in the country. Each parent speaks their language to the child. The second option occurs when the parents have different native languages, none of which is the majority language. Like in the first case, each parent speaks their own native language to the child. The third case would happen if both parents are native speakers of the majority language, but one parent chooses to speak another language to the child. The fourth option happens when both parents speak the minority language, but one parent chooses to speak the majority language to the child (Döpke, 1992). In each of these cases, the language parents use to interact with each other is also of great importance, as language choice between parents is an influential factor in the eventual language dominance of the child (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). Parents might choose to speak the majority language with each other, or they might choose to speak the minority language. Furthermore, each parent might speak the language they speak with the child when addressing each other.

For each of the cases mentioned above, there are various strategies of language use that can be implemented within a family. Parents would greatly benefit from knowing about said strategies, so that they can find the one that best suits their particular language situation and their particular language goals.

In every case study about bilingual families and bilingual child rearing, the One Parent-One language approach (OPOL, as abbreviated by Barron-Huawert) is consistently

mentioned. This strategy is as straightforward as its name: one parent speaks the minority language to the child, while the other speaks the majority language. There are, however, variations within this approach, depending on whether the minority or majority language is dominant at home.

(1) OPOL – ML (majority-language is strongest). In this context, the child's only exposure to the minority language comes from one parent. Parents communicate with each other in the majority language, which is something they have done since they have met. The parent who speaks the majority language is usually monolingual, and has little to no knowledge of the minority language. Relating to this, another important factor is how tolerant the other parent is of the minority language. If the majority-language parent keeps a positive attitude towards the minority language, the chances of success increase significantly. A positive attitude will reassure the child that both languages are okay and important, and they will be more willing to become bilingual. Outside of the house, the child will attend a local school and interact with local children, always using the majority language for communication. In cases in which the mother speaks the minority language, there is an advantage, as the child will probably prefer to use it during the first years of infancy. This occurs due to the fact that most children rely on their mothers for both emotional and physical bonding (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). In a study conducted by Laurel Kamada (1997) about maternal vs. paternal non-native language influence, Leah and Paul were the children of a New Zealander couple who lived in Japan. Both children were homeschooled according to the New Zealand curriculum, so they were both very proficient in English as it was their mother tongue and the language they used for academic purposes. However, they were both also fluent in Japanese, as they interacted with local kids and other local families. Both Leah and Paul grew up to have children. Leah's son is bilingual, fluent in

both English and Japanese. On the other hand, Paul's first child could understand English, but his level declined over time, especially after he entered kindergarten. Paul's second son is completely Japanese monolingual. This might suggest that when the mother speaks the minority language, chances are higher for the child to be bilingual.

(2) OPOL – mL (support for minority-language). At first glance, this strategy might not seem at all different from the one mentioned above. Yet, the support the majority language speaking parent can give to the minority language parent can make all the difference, as it creates a role model for children. "Support for minority language" does not mean, however, that both parents speak the minority language at home. That is a different approach that shall be discussed later. In cases where the minority language is supported, parents who do not speak it are still able to understand it. Therefore, this can allow the minority language parent to not only use the language with the child, but also with their partner. This pattern of language behavior requires conscious appreciation for the culture of the minority language. This strategy can also be a gateway into fully implementing the minority language at home strategy, depending on whether the parents think the child might not be getting enough exposure.

(3) Minority-Language at Home (mL@H). As the name suggests, this strategy refers to the cases in which families choose to only speak the minority language at home, either as a way to establish bilingualism in a child's early years or to protect a minority language when living abroad. There are two types of mL@H families. The first one refers to families in which parents have different native languages, but one of them chooses to use their second language to support their partner's minority language. This implies that at least one parent is bilingual and has sufficient mastery of a second language, that is, he or she is able to use the minority language for everyday situations and for more complex communication. The other type of mL@H family is

the one in which both parents are speakers of the minority language, therefore speaking it at home is an organic and natural decision.

Regarding the OPOL and mL@H strategies, linguist Ily Hollebeke (2023) explains that "parents might, for instance, be convinced that exposure to several languages from an early age confuses children, and that a clear separation of languages (e.g., via the One Person One Language (OPOL) strategy) is essential when raising a multilingual child". However, a survey conducted by Annick De Houwer (2011) challenged the effectiveness of the OPOL method. It showed that parents' language behavior and choices explained why some children only spoke the majority language, despite hearing both at home. These were children whose parents used the majority language to communicate with each other and occasionally with their children. According to De Houwer, "those bilingual families where children ended up speaking just the majority language, Dutch, tended to be families where both parents used the majority language at home, and only one parent used the minority language. Parents who both spoke the majority as well as the minority language at home and parents who both spoke the minority language at home, with one parent in addition using the majority language, had much better chances of having children who spoke both the majority and the minority language." The survey study conducted by De Houwer clearly shows that the OPOL strategy does not necessarily lead to success, that is, to children who actually speak two languages: in 27% of the families where one parent spoke the minority language and the other spoke the majority language, the child ended up speaking only the majority language. The minority language at home strategy, on the other hand, ensures a much higher success rate.

(4) Trilingual strategy. This strategy could have several different scenarios. One of the most common would be an OPOL approach where each parent speaks a different minority

language, and the child then acquires the majority language through the community, that is, school, peer interaction, extended family interaction, and extracurricular activities. A different approach within the trilingual strategy could involve one parent being bilingual or having a bicultural background and desiring to transmit both of those languages simultaneously, alongside the partner's language. A third scenario could involve a couple who speaks different languages but uses a third language to communicate with each other. This approach is known as One Parent, One Language with a third one for parental communication. The third language is generally an international language, such as English, French, or German. In order to implement this approach, both parents must be bilingual, and have sufficient mastery of the third language.

(5) Mixed strategy. This strategy is often regarded or viewed as “lazy”, as it apparently does not follow any apparent patterns the way OPOL does. However, many communities in the world are multilingual, and parents, just as everyone else around them does, switch seamlessly between languages. Their children, therefore, grow up in a multilingual environment and are able to easily learn two or three languages. There are, of course, clear social boundaries that dictate when and where to use each language. Sometimes, as children grow up, OPOL can turn into mixed language since all members of the family can understand each other and following such strict rules all the time can be tiresome. This is not a sign of failure, it is simply a different approach.

(6) Time and place strategy. It refers to the usage of the minority language in very specific situations or times of the day, for example, using the minority language during the weekends or at dinner time. The reason why this strategy is less popular than the others quickly becomes evident: it is much harder to pull off since it requires strict discipline and sticking to a plan. And, on top of all that, children might not always be willing to follow the rules or comply.

Moreover, the amount of input a child receives of the minority language is significantly less than with other strategies such as OPOL or minority language at home.

(7) Artificial or 'Non-Native' strategy. This is an approach used by parents who are both native speakers of the majority language spoken in the country they live in. These parents want their children to learn a second language, and many of them usually wait until the child is old enough for language lessons. Another strategy they apply is hiring a foreign nanny or AuPair. More committed families introduce the child to both languages from birth, and raise their children bilingually using the aforementioned strategies. As it was also mentioned before, these parents tend to choose this type of childrearing in order to give their child more chances at success in life. In 'non-native' cases, parents also need to enjoy the culture of the minority language, which can be encouraged through cultural activities and events outside of their homes. This will be discussed later as it pertains to the external factors of family language management.

The aforementioned seven items are the different strategies that Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert identifies in her book *"Language Strategies for Bilingual Families"* (2004). These are all approaches to language use that parents can implement in their homes, therefore, they belong to what is known as internal control of family language management.

2.5. Parent-Child Interactions

Another topic worth mentioning that directly relates to the family language strategies is parent-child interactions. When it comes to bilingual acquisition, micro-level, day-to-day interactions have a central, pivotal role. Analyzing these interactions in depth can result in a better understanding of why some children establish bilingualism at an early age and why others do not (Lanza, 2007). Döpke (1992) carried out a study on the discourse structures of parents in bilingual families, and in it she demonstrates that the more child-centered the interactions are, the

greater the chance for the child to become an active bilingual, using both the minority and majority languages. A child-centered approach was described by Döpke as utilizing different conversation structures to foster and promote the active participation and input of the child. What this study demonstrates is that, when it comes to parent-child interactions, quality becomes more important than quantity. Another finding from this research revealed that children whose parents engaged in free play with them were more likely to be actively bilingual, as this activity puts the child in the center stage.

In the same study, Döpke points out that the children who attained active bilingualism and a good command of the minority language were those whose parents utilized monolingual strategies in parent-child interactions. In the bilingual-monolingual continuum, Lanza (2007) points out several language strategies:

Table 1

Parent-child interactions as described by Lanza (2007, p.56).

Discourse strategy	Description
Minimal Grasp Strategy	The adult does not give any indications that he or she understands the language the child chose to use.
Expressed Guess Strategy	The adult asks a question using the other language, to which the child answers with "yes" or "no".
Adult Repetition	The adult repeats the child's utterance, but using the other language.
Move On Strategy	The adult allows the conversation to progress, following the child's language choice.
Code Switching	The adult uses both languages or code-switches within the same sentence.

It is important to note that, on occasions, the use of these strategies operate below the conscious level as parents are immersed in the interactions. Therefore, it is of particular interest to study the way the child reacts to these strategies. Parents can create a monolingual or bilingual context for the child, and a more strict use of the strategies in the monolingual end of the continuum might ensure that the child willingly chooses the minority language in future parent-child interactions.

Table 2

Lanza's discourse strategies in the monolingual-bilingual continuum (2007, p.56).

Monolingual Context	Minimal Grasp	Expressed Guess	Adult Repetition	Move On Strategy	Code Switching	Bilingual Context

The utilization of discourse strategies that explicitly reflect parents' language preferences may effectively influence children to consistently choose and use that particular language in future interactions with their parents. In contrast, some parents are adopting the "Happylingual" approach, which maintains the minority language but puts less pressure on the children to use a certain language in parent-child interactions. This would be a case of bilingual communication strategy, in which the parents recognize code-switching as a natural part of the bilingual experience (Kopeliovich, 2013). If code-switching is associated with well-defined contexts, such as speaking on the phone or conversing in shops and restaurants, and if the minority language is actively used within the home, then it should not hinder language acquisition (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004).

2.6. Code-switching

As it was just mentioned, code-switching is a significant part of the bilingual experience. Thus, it is absolutely normal for bilingual children to engage in language practices involving code-switching. It is important to mention, however, the difference between code-switching and language mixing, which tend to be used interchangeably. The former refers to the use of two or more languages in the same conversation, changing seamlessly from one language to the other without leaving the parameters of what is considered grammatically correct. Mixing, on the other hand, refers to a language behavior common amongst multilingual children, in which "a word of language A or an utterance which contains elements from languages A and B is mixed into the language context of language B" (Cantone, 2007, p. 13). If one language is stronger than the other, this might lead to unidirectional mixing due to the fact that the child lacks some vocabulary and language structure in one language, they use the one they already have knowledge on.

According to Milroy and Muysken (1995, p. 7), "perhaps the central issue in bilingualism research is code-switching." Researching this phenomenon can shed light on understanding how two languages interact in a bilingual individual. Yet code-switching, despite being a normal, universal occurrence for bilingual individuals, is still viewed in a negative light in bilingual communities. Sadly, this type of language mixing has frequently been misconstrued as an indication that bilingual individuals lack proficiency in speaking either one or both languages. Nonetheless, bilingual children start mixing as soon as they develop language, and are fully capable of distinguishing between their two languages (Cantone, 2007). Code-switching should not be viewed as a sign of confusion. Instead, it demonstrates children's enhanced linguistic and cognitive control (Bhatt & Bolonyai, 2011).

In a study conducted by Yow et al. (2017), children's code-switching behavior and their language competency were investigated in preschool settings. English-Mandarin bilingual children, aged between five and six years old, were observed over a period of five days in their childcare centers. Despite the children being less proficient in expressive Mandarin than in expressive English, code-switching was positively related with a significant increase in Mandarin expressive language. That is, code-switching helped children produce a larger variety of Mandarin words, despite the fact that the children were more proficient in English. Moreover, English competency in the children showed no correlation with the amount of code-switched utterances. These findings coincide with other recent studies that support the idea that, contrary to popular belief, code-switching is not a result of language incompetency. Instead, code-switching shows a positive correlation with language proficiency. These findings suggest that children might use code-switching as a platform to facilitate the development of their languages, particularly the weaker one. It is possible that young bilingual children may not have acquired the ability to express themselves fully and accurately in both languages. Therefore, code-switching enables them to navigate and employ both languages (with the stronger one supporting the weaker one) while maintaining the intended meaning. Thus, code-switching can be used as a scaffold for the weaker language, where complex structures from the stronger language are used in combination with simpler structures and lexical items from the weaker language (Yow et al., 2017).

2.7. Children’s Language Preferences

Code-switching as a practice is related to the fact that children, much like adults, have autonomy when it comes to language choices. According to Piller (2001), children make their own choices regarding the home language. It can be assumed that bilingual children might

showcase preference for using one of their languages, influenced by their beliefs about the relative importance of that language within their family. Bilingual children form beliefs about labels such as English and Spanish at an early stage, and these beliefs play a crucial role in comprehending their speech behaviors. These beliefs likely also influence their decision to use a specific language or not (Carroll, 2015).

In contrast to the extensive amount of data regarding parents' preferences regarding language use, there is less data regarding children's preferences (Schwartz, 2010). A study by Tannenbaum (2003) attempted to gain more insight on this topic. Questionnaires were given to 307 children between the ages of 8 and 11, living in Sydney, Australia, as well as to one of their immigrant parents from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The results indicate that parents and children show contrasting language maintenance patterns. Parents demonstrated differentiation between public and intimate domains in their communication with their children, displaying sensitivity to context. However, the children's language choices were not tied to specific interaction domains with their parents. Instead, there was a notable inclination among the children to predominantly use the majority language across all domains.

As stated by Steiner et al. (2008), it is important that the child identifies positively with the language. They also add that it is not an overstatement to suggest that if a child does not have a positive identification with the second language, the likelihood of them becoming bilingual is highly unlikely.

To help the child make a positive association with the minority language, many parents utilize audiovisual media such as movies, TV shows, music, cartoons, and books. In a study conducted by Akgül et al. (2017) regarding the beliefs of parents raising bilingual children, they found that parents use audiovisual means (e.g. cartoons, books, poems, and TV shows) while

raising bilingual children. Similarly, in an article written by King and Fogle (2009), many of the parents that were interviewed relied on commercial linguistic materials such as books, videos, TV shows, and music in order to help their children acquire a minority language. Therefore, the use of audiovisual media as a strategy for children to get exposure to the minority language is widely implemented amongst parents. However, it has been proven that audiovisual materials can only do so much, and direct interaction with the child is much more effective for language acquisition.

2.8. Bilingual Education

Despite the success all the aforementioned strategies have in maintaining a child's active bilingualism, they may not be enough to ensure biliteracy, that is, literacy in both the majority and minority language. To avoid this issue, many parents opt for enrolling their children in a bilingual school. Due to the fact that many children spend 15,000 hours in school, there is great potential for them to develop biliteracy (Baker, 2007).

In order to minimize confusion, the term "bilingual education" is best used to describe schools and classrooms that teach certain, significant, or all academic subjects in two languages. This is referred to as the strong version of bilingual education, as defined by Baker and Wright (2021). Conversely, there are weak forms of bilingual education that permit children to use their native language for a brief and temporary transitional period. However, the language of instruction swiftly transitions from the minority language to solely using the majority language.

Superficially, it would appear that the aim of strong bilingual education is to create bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism in children. When compared with mainstream monolingual schools, effective bilingual schools are expected to demonstrate that their children are as equally versed in the majority language as those from monolingual schools. Moreover,

children from bilingual schools also need to showcase literacy in the majority language, and an overall performance throughout the curriculum that is at least equal to that of peers in mainstream schools. The added-value of bilingual schools lies in the fact that children acquire proficiency in both oral and written skills in the minority language, along with the development of desirable personal traits like self-esteem, and positive social adaptation including tolerance for diversity. Thus, bilingual children are expected to achieve similar levels of success as their peers in monolingual schools, while also attaining bilingualism and biliteracy without compromising overall academic achievement.

2.9. Conclusion

The literature review hereby presented delves into the complexities of Family Language Policy (FLP), exploring its various components and how they intersect with bilingualism. Moreover, different bilingual child-rearing strategies are discussed, as well as bilingual and monolingual discourse strategies. Various studies have been incorporated into the review, dealing with an array of topics such as bilingualism, code-switching, and attitudes towards language. These studies contribute valuable insights for the present study and prove to be of paramount importance for its advancement. Therefore, the existing literature serves as a basis for this study, which seeks to describe how three parents from different families are raising bilingual children.

Chapter III

3. Methodology

3.1. Type of Study

In order to conduct this research, a multiple case study was implemented, as well as a qualitative approach. A case study proves to be ideal as a method to answer the proposed research questions. It sheds light on a choice or a series of choices: what drove these decisions, how they were put into action, and what outcomes they yielded. (Schramm 1971, as cited in Yin, 2017). Moreover, case studies provide a comprehensive depiction of current situations or events (Frechtling et al, 2002). Lastly, a case study serves as a suitable research approach when the objective is to acquire detailed, contextual, and profound insights into a particular real-world subject (McCombes, 2023). Therefore, it becomes evident that as this study aims to shed light on how three specific families manage their Family Language Policies, a case study is the most suitable research design.

3.2. Setting and Participants

The study takes place in Asuncion, Paraguay, where all three participants reside. The initial two interviews took place within participants' homes, which were chosen as settings since they offered comfort and familiarity. The third interview occurred remotely via Zoom, aligning with the participant's preference. The interviews were conducted between November and December of 2023.

This study comprises three participants, all of whom are raising bilingual children. Their ages span from the late 30s to the late 40s.

The first interviewee is a married man, father to a sixteen-year-old daughter and a thirteen-year-old son. He is fluent in both Spanish and English. His wife is bilingual in Spanish and Guarani, while their children are bilingual in Spanish and English.

The second participant, also a married father, has a five-year-old daughter. He is trilingual in Spanish, English, and German. His wife is trilingual in Spanish, English, and French, and their daughter is bilingual in English and Spanish.

The third interviewee, a mother of two, has a six-year-old son and a four-year-old daughter. She is married to a man from the United States, whose primary language is English and has limited proficiency in Spanish. The interviewee is bilingual in Spanish and English, and her children are bilingual in the same languages.

The sampling method utilized for this study was purposeful, since the cases that were included in this research were handpicked due the fact that they fit the criteria.

3.3. Data Collection

The method employed to collect data for this study was open-ended, qualitative interviews, specifically utilizing the interview guide approach as proposed by Johnson and Christensen (2007). The interview guide approach is more structured than just a conversation, as there is a protocol listing of the open-ended questions that shall be asked to the participants. All interviewees were asked the same questions in the same order, yet the follow-up questions were slightly different for each of them. Moreover, the wording of a question was changed if the interviewee failed to understand it in its original form. The interviews contained twenty five to twenty seven open- and closed- ended questions; the first one lasted fifty minutes, the second one

lasted forty minutes, and the third one lasted twenty five minutes. The length of the conversations depended solely on how extensive each interviewee decided to make his/her answers, and some participants elaborated their answers further than others. The data was recorded by utilizing the voice recording feature of a mobile device.

3.4. Data Analysis

After collecting all the data, a transcript of the interviews was created. This was done by putting the audio files into an online speech-to-text converter. Subsequently, the data was coded using Dovetail. The latter was employed to evaluate the process of thematic analysis, as it offers specialized, user-friendly tools for expediting and improving the thematic analysis process. This software served as an aid to categorize the different themes, topics, and subtopics.

In order to code the data, a deductive approach was taken. In this approach, the process begins with a set of predefined codes, followed by the identification of excerpts that correspond to these codes. Such predefined codes were created based on the research questions proposed for this study.

Once every part of the interviews was assigned a relevant code, common themes were grouped. The codes and themes were then used to write a narrative description of the analysis. Finally, the data was described, compared, and contrasted in order to find similar and distinct themes amongst the participants.

Chapter IV

4. Results

The outcomes derived from the three conducted interviews will be unveiled in this section. Such findings will be categorized into four key themes, as well as sub-themes, which represent the most relevant aspects that were discussed during the interviews. The first key theme pertains to bilingualism and its definitions. Each interviewee gave their own explanation for what they thought constituted a bilingual person, which is vital information to answer one of the research questions of this study. The second theme discusses the interviewees' attitudes towards bilingualism and language, as well as how comfortable they feel using English and Spanish. The third key theme -which deals with the different strategies parents use to promote bilingualism- is divided into two sub-themes: 1) family communication, which sheds a light to the linguistic landscape of each household; 2) and media, which explores the children's consumption of books and audiovisual materials as an aid to encourage language skills. Lastly, the fourth theme that shall be discussed are the challenges faced by these three sets of parents when it comes to bilingual child rearing.

4.1. Definitions of Bilingualism

When asked to provide their own definition of bilingualism, all three interviewees expressed the difficulty of such endeavor due to the ambiguous nature of the concept. The first participant (the father from family number 1) highlighted the importance of having command in two languages, while mentioning that even linguists tend to disagree on the definition:

> Oh, that's a hard question because even linguists do not agree. And I think basically being bilingual is having command of two languages. Now, how much of a command is the discussion here. Because just being able to say, “may I go to the bathroom?” in one language... Does that mean that you are bilingual? No. So how competent must you be in order to be bilingual? That's the topic of discussion, and no one seems to agree on that, apparently.

When asked if he would consider himself bilingual, Participant 1 expanded on his definition of bilingualism. He emphasized the ability to use both languages fluently on a regular basis, and not having to think too much to formulate sentences: “I do not have to think a lot in order to construct my sentences. I am fluent, and I use English and Spanish on a daily basis as well, so definitely that makes me bilingual.”

The second participant (the father from family number 2) also expressed that the key factor in bilingualism is being proficient in two languages. Then, he further expanded his definition by explaining how proficiency in both languages -which does not necessarily have to be always perfect- needs to allow the speaker to navigate social situations without major issues:

> My own definition of bilingualism would be: you're proficient in two languages, and you manage at least every day vocab, expressions, and you don't feel out of place in social situations. Your language skills don’t have to be perfect all the time, but they need to allow you to navigate social situations proficiently.

The third interviewee (the mother from family number 3) provided a short and concise definition of bilingualism, yet much broader in scope. In her own words, a bilingual person is “someone who is exposed to two languages on a regular basis.”

All three participants answered positively to the question of whether they considered themselves bilingual in Spanish and English. Participant 1 was born and raised in Paraguay, therefore Spanish is his mother tongue. Participant 3 also stated that her first language is Spanish despite the fact that her mother is American: "My mom is an American, but she never spoke English to us because she was told that we were going to get confused."

Both Participants 1 and 3 learned English later on in their adolescence by receiving formal language instruction. Participant 2, however, found himself in a different situation due to the fact that his first language is German, which makes him trilingual. He expressed that "with German, English is so much easier to learn because there are cognates. And German grammar is much more complex than English grammar." Therefore, he learned the language on his own, by reading books and listening to music in English.

4.2. Attitudes Towards Bilingualism

Overall, the three people who participated in the study showed an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards bilingualism. When asked about how they felt about being bilingual, the interviewees agreed on the fact that it makes them feel proud, and that knowing multiple languages allows them to broaden their minds to new concepts and terms that are unique to each language.

Participant 1 shared that he feels "proud (to be bilingual), like I have accomplished something. We are a bilingual country, but I am bilingual in a different language, in a foreign language, so I think... I feel happy about that."

In addition, Participant 2 asserted that being bilingual

> Feels great. Being able to think of concepts, ideas and expressions that just don't exist in one language or the other.... So that feels great, being able to just switch and

understand concepts. And then you have these experiences where you go: I wouldn't be able to put this into words otherwise.

Participant 3 also emphasized the significance of being proficient in using diverse expressions and understanding concepts unique to each language. She noted that "being bilingual is great. I think it allows me to communicate with more people. I think it also broadens your mind to new terms and new ways of thinking."

Moreover, all three of them touched upon the Spanish-Guarani bilingualism of Paraguay, highlighting it as a big part of the country's identity. In regards to this, Participant 3 commented: "I think as someone who was born and raised in Paraguay, I really admire bilinguals who speak Spanish and Guarani; I think that ties really neatly into our identity or our culture."

When questioned about why being bilingual was important to them, all three participants underscored the multitude of opportunities it afforded them. They emphasized the ability to form connections and make friends more easily, the capacity to earn a livelihood, and the opportunity to travel, which are all attributed to their bilingual proficiency. In doing so, they collectively agreed that bilingualism brought them both personal and professional satisfaction. Summing up the interviewees' sentiments, Participant 2 mentioned that being bilingual was important to him "because it's become part of my identity and part of my skill set. So, yeah, it is important, 100%. For economic reasons, social reasons, and experiential reasons."

In addition to the aforementioned reasons, Participant 3 expressed that being bilingual was also important to her because her husband is American. Due to this, she wanted her children to be able to speak their father's first language. She noted that "personally, being

bilingual is very important because I want my kids to be exposed to both my native language and my husband's native language, which is English."

When questioned about their feelings towards English and Spanish, Participants 1 and 3 expressed comfort in both languages in various contexts. They noted feeling more at ease using English in professional settings, while maintaining comfort in both English and Spanish during social interactions. In contrast, Participant 2 conveyed a greater level of comfort in English for both work and social situations. Additionally, Participant 2 shared the observation that the more he engages in English, the more challenging it becomes to use Spanish.

The positive outlook on bilingualism, evident in all participants, seamlessly intertwines with the reasons behind their choice to raise bilingual children. Their collective aspiration is rooted in providing their children with more opportunities, whether in the realm of work, friendships, or any other areas where proficiency in English might be an advantage. Participant 2 captures this sentiment by stating:

> It would be such a disservice not to teach my daughter both. One language is not enough. Why would we not teach her English when all of our friends all over the world speak English? Without it, she'd be lost.

Additionally, all three participants highlighted the importance of enabling their children to communicate with relatives and family friends who exclusively speak English. With each family having connections to English-speaking relatives or friends, the parents emphasized the desire for their children to have the linguistic skills necessary to engage meaningfully with this part of their social and familial network. Participant 3 noted, "If we go visit the children's grandparents in the United States, then it's really important for them to be able to communicate with that side of their family as well."

4.3. Strategies to Promote Bilingualism

Regarding strategies to promote bilingualism in their household, all three interviewees demonstrated a deliberate and conscious understanding of the decisions they made and the language policies they implemented for their children. When questioned about their exposure to materials on bilingual child rearing, each participant confirmed having engaged with relevant information. Whether through magazine articles, scientific papers, or workshops for expecting parents, they all expressed a proactive effort to seek and incorporate knowledge about fostering bilingualism in their parenting journey.

Regarding the aforementioned topic, Participant 1 commented that “Magazine articles were really good in giving me tips.” Participant 2 shared that, while he lived in Finland, he and his wife

> Attended a few classes, where they were giving courses and talks to intercultural couples. And there they discussed what strategies you can use to raise a bilingual child. So like, the ‘day strategy.’ So today everybody speaks Spanish at home, the other day everybody speaks Finnish... And then the pros and cons of that.

Lastly, Participant 3 added: “I've read many papers and I follow blogs as well. I also worked in a bilingual lab with children, so I tried to implement the best practices.”

4.3.1. Family communication

This section will delve into an intricate exploration of the linguistic dynamics within each of the three households. A detailed examination will unfold, outlining the specific languages employed in various contexts. This includes the languages used by the parents when communicating with each other, the languages employed in parent-child interactions, and the strategic choices surrounding when and where these languages are utilized. This

comprehensive analysis aims to illustrate the nuanced language landscape that characterizes each household.

Family #1

The first family consists of the father, the mother, an adolescent daughter, and a younger son. Both parents are bilingual and proficient speakers of Spanish. In the case of the father (interviewee 1), he is English-Spanish bilingual, with Spanish being his L1. As for the mother, she is Spanish-Guarani bilingual, with Guarani being her L1. Despite being a native speaker of Guarani, the mother did not pass the language on to her children, and she always speaks to them in Spanish. Regarding the matter, the father stated that "My wife feels sorry because she didn't teach them Guarani. She's a native speaker of Guarani, so we lost one language."

Between the two parents, they communicate mostly in Spanish, and sometimes he uses some English. While she usually understands what was said, she always answers back in Spanish, which is why he ends up switching to Spanish again.

When it comes to parent-child interactions, the father uses English with some code-mixing. He asserted:

> When we knew that we were pregnant, I proposed that to my wife and I said, 'I'm going to speak in English, you're going to speak in Spanish.' And she agreed to that. With my children, I mainly use English, but depending on the situation, if my wife is there... Well, sometimes I still use English. She understands us. It's been 20 years so... she understands us. She understands our English. If other people speak English, she doesn't.

Nevertheless, he noted that the language he uses with his children is always dictated by the context. He never uses English with his children if a non-English speaker is present and can hear them:

> When we are surrounded by other people, we feel restricted. I switch to Spanish, or I probably speak English in a lower volume just to them. That's usually when we are surrounded by people. My daughter approaches me and she whispers in my ear in English.

The father mentioned that he always tried to be flexible with language and avoided being too strict with using just English all the time. He emphasized the importance of making communication as natural as possible, which allows for code-switching to occur regularly. He mentioned:

> I code-switch. I mean, when they were younger I would stick just to English, but now I am more relaxed and we keep switching. Code mixing and code-switching happen every single day. It is important to not be structured. To not "teach the language" but to use it naturally, and to not feel bad if you use your first language. You shouldn't be that strict. They say relax, chill out, and speak normally, and they will pick it up. And that is precisely what happened.

In regards to code-switching, the children also do it regularly. The father shared that "The children code-switch every day. Especially if my wife is present. If she's not, the tendency is to speak more English." Moreover, they utilize code-mixing to create humorous situations, especially the son. "When he wants to play around or when he wants to be funny, he mixes Guarani, Spanish and English. It's super funny and it creates a very interesting linguistic situation at home."

In the past, the children used to speak mostly English to each other, but they stopped doing so as they grew up. Now, their communication is a mix of both English and Spanish, depending on the subject that is being discussed: "They use mainly Spanish, but automatically switch to English for specific subjects, such as movies, films, games, songs, or videos they've watched. They switch to English because they watch everything in English, and they see no point in translating."

Family #2

The second family comprises the father, the mother, and a five-year-old daughter. The father (interviewee 2) is trilingual in German, Spanish, and English; and the mother is trilingual French, Spanish, and English. Both of them speak some Japanese and some Finnish. The mother's native language is Spanish; and, even though he was raised in Paraguay, the dad's first language is German. Between the two of them, they use English for communication, in every situation. However, since they are multilingual and know various languages, they code-switch a lot during their conversations: "I would say I use English with my wife 90% of the time. Or 80. And then we switch to any other language that we speak."

The couple lived in Finland for many years, and their daughter was born there. While the family resided in the European country, they decided that, for parent-child interactions, the mother would use Spanish and the father would use English. That way, their daughter would acquire Spanish and English at home, and some Finnish in daycare. The interviewee commented:

> When our daughter was born, we decided that I would only talk to her in English and my wife would talk to her in Spanish. If we had stayed to live in Finland, these years, we probably would have stuck to my wife Spanish, me English, because then she would

> have also gone to daycare in Finnish as there's very few English speaking daycares there. And then she would have just integrated into regular society in Finland, and then she would have spoken Finnish.

Once they moved back to Paraguay, they were faced with a challenging situation. The girl started using English less and less until she stopped altogether. The father shared that the reason why this occurred is because she was very clearly more attached to her mother, who only spoke Spanish to her. Moreover, the child's grandparents in Paraguay spoke Spanish as well. As a consequence, she developed an emotional attachment to the language and stopped using English considerably, despite the fact that her father was still using it with her:

> Once we moved back to Paraguay, she was surrounded by Spanish, and she was very much attached to her mom at the beginning. Very much. And of course, mommy spoke in Spanish, grandma spoke Spanish, grandpa spoke Spanish. So there was Spanish overload and it was just me speaking English. Then we realized that there was this emotional-affective side to the language; and we decided, if I'm the only one who speaks English and no one else does, and she doesn't hear her mother speak it, then she won't either. And then we realized she started to drop English considerably.

Thus, the parents had to switch to a new strategy. They considered that their daughter was getting enough exposure to Spanish both at home and outside of the house, so they decided that the mother would start using English too:

> Then my wife said, "okay, sure, I'll speak English too." And once she did, our daughter switched. So, we decided that we would only speak English at home, all day, every day, everywhere. If it's just the three of us, it's always English.

As soon as the mother started speaking English to her, the daughter started doing so too. Now, the three family members communicate in English almost exclusively, with the exception of some code-switching, done mostly by the parents.

When asked if his daughter code-switches, the father replied:

> Code-switching for fun? Yeah. Not like "mommy, I want *cena*." No, not at all. She doesn't go, 'daddy, let's go to the *supermercado*.' That doesn't happen. That's not a thing. Just for fun, but not because she needs to. Sometimes she forgets words, and in those cases I just tell her what the word is.

As it was explained, the girl does not usually code-switch. She either uses Spanish or English, and does not mix the two of them unless it is for fun.

When it comes to social situations such as parties or family gatherings, all three of them still use English to communicate with each other, not caring about other people's comments or remarks. The interviewee noted:

> I always switch to English (in social situations). I don't really care if people look at me weird. If I have to reprimand my daughter in social situations, it's gonna be English. If I'm gonna be playful, happy, and loving, it's gonna be English. If I need her to do something, it's gonna be English. And it's actually very helpful because most people here don't speak it, and so we have all these codes that nobody else understands. So I don't really care if people stare or they look at me funny, especially extended family, because they can be very judgy. No, I don't care, and neither does my wife. We just go with English, all the time.

If a non-English speaker joins them, then they swiftly switch to Spanish so as to not be rude. “Well, in those cases, yes. Of course, I mean, we're not going to shut people out. That's not what we do.”

Regarding the various other contexts in their life as a family, they use English exclusively:

> But if we have to communicate with just her, then it stays in English. But with the rest of the family we speak Spanish. I mean, it's not like I'm going to go to a social gathering and just sit by myself there and speak to no one, that's not a thing. But if I have to address her specifically and everyone else is speaking Spanish, I don’t care, I just use English.

Family #3

The members of family number 3 are the father, the mother (interviewee 3), a five-year-old son, and a younger daughter. The mother, who was interviewed for this study, is Spanish-English bilingual. Spanish is her first language and English is her second, and she is fluent in both. The father is from the United States, so his native language is English; he speaks some Spanish, but is not fluent. The couple speak English to each other all the time, since it is the language they can both speak proficiently.

The mother code-switches a lot, both with her children and with the members of her extended family who speak English and Spanish: “Within my family, we code-switch a lot. And within my extended family too- with my sisters, my mom and so forth.” The father, however, does not, as he is not fluent in Spanish and code-switching is not something that comes naturally to him. “My husband doesn't switch. He speaks to you in English, mostly, or Spanish when he does, but he cannot switch easily between both.”

The couple lived in the United States for many years, and their eldest son was born and raised there during the first three years of his life. Their youngest daughter was also born in the U.S., but was mostly raised in Paraguay.

Concerning parent-child interactions in family #3, the interviewee stressed the importance of exposing her children to both languages. Thus, when they lived in the US, she spoke to them both in Spanish and in English. Once they moved to Paraguay, she kept using both languages with them. She emphasized that she does not try to enforce any specific strategy, and simply opts for whatever approach aligns best with the needs of her family. Therefore, whichever language her children choose to speak, she continues the conversation in that language. In this dynamic language environment, her children determine the language direction of the conversation, and she follows their lead. She mentioned that

> It depends. If they speak to me in English, then I'll answer in English. They speak to me in Spanish, we'll do it in Spanish. But then if someone else is involved in the conversation,then we'll do whatever is best for group communication.

At home, nevertheless, they speak mostly English since that is what the father speaks. “I think I would generally speak English to my children because that's most of what my husband can speak. And outside our house we then speak Spanish.”

The father speaks only English to his children. The interviewee explained: “My husband speaks English. He also uses a little bit of Spanish, only if other Spanish speaking people are there that don't know any English. And he'll try.”

In social situations, the children have no problem adapting to whatever language is being spoken, whether it is English or Spanish. “My kids speak both English and Spanish, depending on the context and who they're talking to. For example, if a nanny comes during the

weekend, then they'll speak Spanish. They can engage who can speak what and then adapt." When it comes to parent-child interactions outside the house, the interviewee stated that

> The language we use depends. If they speak to me in English, then I'll answer in English. They speak to me in Spanish, we'll do it in Spanish. But then if someone else is involved in the conversation,then we'll do whatever is best for group communication.

4.3.2. Media

Media consumption represents a significant aspect of any child's life. The two children in Family 1 have been immersed in English media since their infancy, with a preference for watching movies, television shows, and YouTube videos exclusively in English. Regularly consuming videos has significantly contributed to the improvement of their English skills. Regarding this, the father commented:

> They have progressed regarding vocabulary and also basic grammatical structures. There are specific grammatical areas in which they still need to improve. But I have seen through the years how their language flourished, and I love it. They have improved a lot, and it's mainly because of YouTube, I would say. They watch a lot of videos.

In terms of literature, the children own many books in both English and Spanish. During their younger years, bedtime stories were an important part of their routine, with the parents recognizing the pivotal role of books in aiding language development and bilingualism. The interviewee, aware of the importance of books, used Amazon to buy an extensive collection of English works for his children. "Storytime at night was a must back then. And, whenever I wasn't home, because I teach at night also, my wife would read them in Spanish and they equally loved it." While the daughter has developed a love for reading, amassing her own collection of books and comic books in English, the son does not enjoy reading in either language:

> My daughter has volumes of book series in English, and she reads them fluently. My son doesn't like reading, no matter the language. But he does read in English when he watches YouTube videos; if there are things to read, he reads them.

In the case of the daughter from Family 2, her exposure to media is characterized by a predominant preference for the English language. As mentioned by the parent, “My daughter consumes media in English.” The family's reliance on car travel to move around the city has created a routine where the daughter spends considerable amounts of time in the car, listening to music in German, Finnish, and primarily English.

In terms of television and video content, the parent emphasized a selective approach, stating, “Oh, no. We watch very specific shows. We don't let her watch just anything.” This intentional decision extends to reading materials, with the family investing in a substantial collection of books, approximately 70 to 80, predominantly in English.

> We buy so many books. She has 70 or 80 books in her room now, in English, all of them in English, some of them in Spanish. My wife reads to her in Spanish. Most of the books are in English, and we read in English and we play in English. We watch shows in English.

Regarding music, the parent highlights a deliberate decision not to expose their child to traditional children's songs, and instead, the daughter has been immersed in a wide range of music genres reflective of the family's preferences. The parent acknowledges that the media landscape for their child is predominantly English, encompassing not only music and books but also videos, TV shows, and other educational content such as SciShow for kids. The interviewee stated,

> Within reason, we never played kiddy songs or anything like that, and she's always been exposed to music in English. And there's this very famous Finnish cartoon. It's called *The Moomins*, and you'll find it on YouTube, and they're all in English. So yes, mostly English. And then she watches a lot of SciShow for kids, and they're all in English. So media for her is mostly English.

Moving on to the children from Family 3, their media consumption is also in English. The mother, interviewee 3, highlighted the importance of books both in English and Spanish, as well as mention that their children watch television exclusively in English:

> Well, my children love to read. I mean, being read to. My son is learning to read. So we have books that are bilingual. We have books that are just in Spanish or just in English and we, youknow, alternate. And I think they know that we go to the US- or they go at least once a year. So they're also very driven by that, being able to communicate when they go somewhere, which is the US so far.So I would say books, mostly. And also I don't really like them watching TV, but if they have to watch TV then they'll do it in English, for example.

4.4. Challenges faced

Participants were asked about what were, in their opinion, the hardest challenges of raising bilingual children. Interviewee 1 considered grammatical structures and spelling to be the most challenging, since his children had some issues in regards to them. During this question, the mother also had the chance to sit down and answer herself. She stated that a particularly hard aspect of bilingual child rearing was feeling left out in situations where her husband and children spoke only English. She uttered that “Sometimes, you feel excluded when you can’t understand everything that they are saying.”

The mother also added that her daughter did not start speaking until she was three, and that the girl struggled with both languages in her infancy. Moreover, when her children were very young, it was challenging to understand them due to the myriad made-up words they invented. She shared:

> Talking was difficult for my daughter when she was a little girl. She only started speaking properly when she was around three years old, and it was a challenging process even during that time. She would designate made-up words to certain objects. For example, she called shoes *fafá*. It was quite hard for me to realize that *fafá* meant shoe. *Tapada* meant blanket. And other words like those, which I believe she invented because neither English nor Spanish were clicking in her head. Therefore, she would invent a third word to communicate.And then her little brother would use those same invented words. In fact, they only realized those words were made-up once they were older.

Moving on to Interviewee 2, he highlighted two main aspects of bilingual child rearing which he finds the most challenging. Firstly, he shared that he found it particularly difficult to realize feelings play a significant role in language preferences:

> I think the most challenging thing for me was realizing that feelings play a greater role in your cognitive and your intellectual development than I would like to accept that it does. And I saw it with my kid, she was much more attached to her mom at the beginning. And once she saw her mom didn't use English, she was like, “well, then I don't care about English.” Then we realized my wife had to speak it regularly. And then she switched. It was purely emotional, and it was directly that. I never really wanted to believe that was a big thing, and then, yeah, I had to accept that emotional attachment to situations, to

people, they really enable certain cognitive functioning, development, whatever you want to call it.

Secondly, he emphasized how taxing it is to navigate multiple languages in various settings throughout the day. This includes the additional responsibility of ensuring the transmission of the language to his daughter:

> It's kind of taxing to have to switch languages all the time. So at the end of the day, my brain is tired because I have to live in Spanish outside, I work in English most of the time, I deal with other languages too... Then I have to make sure I transmit language appropriately to her too. And that is actually very taxing.

Lastly, Interviewee 3 shared that the biggest challenge for her was the lack of exposure to Spanish her children were getting while living in the United States. She stated:

> Well, when we lived in the US, I think it would have been harder for us to raise the children bilingual because there, Spanish is not as readily available. And here it's kind of the opposite. You can find a lot of texts, a lot of places that have some sort of English speaking program. So I think here they actually get more exposure to both languages. In the US, my son had mostly exposure to English because they spoke mostly English at daycare, his friends spoke mostly English there. I think here it's a lot easier.

4.5. Discussion

By examining the bilingual practices of three different families, the present study aimed to uncover the strategies that parents implement to encourage bilingualism in their children, as well as how parents' attitudes and definitions of bilingualism affect said strategies. Additionally, the research revealed the extent to which code-switching takes place among the children of the

participants. Through interviews and thematic analysis, the intricate details of family communication were unveiled, together with other factors that shape the bilingual upbringing of the children in each household.

The main research question focused on identifying the strategies implemented by the three parents to encourage their children's proficiency in English in a country where Spanish serves as the dominant language. In Family 1, the father communicates in English, while the mother employs Spanish. This adheres to the One Parent-One Language approach (OPOL), as articulated by Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert (2004). OPOL involves one parent speaking the minority language to the child, while the other communicates in the majority language. Within the aforementioned approach, family 1 leans toward OPOL – ML (majority-language is strongest). In this context, most of the children's exposure to the minority language comes from one parent. Parents communicate with each other in the majority language, which is something they have done since they met (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004).

Furthermore, the first interviewee engages in code-switching and allows his children to utilize both languages during interactions with him. This aligns with bilingual discourse strategies proposed by Lanza (2007), with interviewee number one employing the "move on" strategy and the code-switching strategy. Participant 1's interactions with his children are also in accordance with the "Happylingual" approach introduced by Kopeliovich (2013). This approach involves maintaining the use of the minority language while imposing less pressure on children to strictly use only a particular language during parent-child interactions. Within this strategy, the parents acknowledge code-switching as a natural and accepted aspect of the bilingual experience.

Concerning media, the interview revealed that Participant 1 utilizes audiovisual materials, books, and music in English to facilitate their children's acquisition of the language. The

emphasis on books has been a consistent practice since the children's infancy. This aligns with studies conducted by Akgül et al. (2017) and King and Fogle (2009), which discovered that parents employ audiovisual resources such as cartoons, books, poems, and TV shows in raising bilingual children to aid them in acquiring a minority language.

Parents from family 2 utilized two different strategies to encourage bilingualism in their daughter. When they lived in Finland, the mother spoke Spanish at home and the father spoke English, and it was expected that the child would integrate into society and acquire Finnish through interactions outside of her home. This corresponds with the trilingual approach proposed by Barron-Hauwaert (2004). This strategy encompasses various scenarios, and Family 2 falls into the most common one. In this scenario, an OPOL approach is employed, with each parent speaking a distinct minority language. The child then acquires the majority language through community interactions, including school, peer engagement, extended family interactions, and extracurricular activities.

However, when they moved back to Paraguay, the parents maintained the same language policy where the mother spoke Spanish to the child and the father spoke English. The child suddenly found herself in a Spanish-speaking country, and the latter went from being the minority language in Finland to being the majority language in Paraguay. This caused a “Spanish overload” for the girl, and she markedly decreased her use of English, opting to exclusively communicate in the majority language. De Houwer (2011) suggests that children who only speak one language despite being exposed to two languages at home are more likely to come from families where only one parent uses the minority language. Conversely, children in families where both parents speak the minority language at home are significantly more likely to be proficient in both languages. Due to this, Family Number 2 had to switch to the

Minority-Language at Home (mL@H) strategy. As explained by Barron-Hauwaert (2004), this approach is used by families who opt to exclusively use the minority language at home. This choice may serve as a means to cultivate bilingualism during a child's formative years.

The father from this family stated that he only speaks English to his daughter. Whenever she utters something in Spanish because she lacks the word in English, the father rephrases her statement but using English. This aligns with Lanza's monolingual strategies for parent-child interactions (2007), more specifically the "Adult Repetition" strategy. These parents consistently employ English in every facet of their daily interactions with their child. According to the father, their playtime activities with their daughter specifically involve the use of English. This practice aligns with the outcomes of a research study conducted by Döpke (1992), where it was discovered that children who engaged in free play with their parents were more inclined to be actively bilingual. This is attributed to the nature of these activities, which place the child at the center stage.

Similarly to Family 1, the interviewee revealed that he and his wife use audiovisual materials, books, and music to encourage English acquisition. This aligns with the findings from Akgül et al. (2017) and King and Fogle (2009).

Family 3 utilizes a different strategy from the two other families. At home, the language landscape of this family aligns with Barron-Hauwaert's "mixed strategy" (2004). This strategy does not follow any apparent patterns the way OPOL does. Parents, in this case the mother, switch seamlessly between Spanish and English, and the children grow up in a multilingual environment. There are, of course, clear social boundaries that dictate when and where to use each language. However, since the father only speaks English to his children, it is also possible

to argue that this is a case of Minority-Language at Home (mL@H), in which one of the parents switches between the minority and majority language.

Family 3's language practices are in accordance with the "Happylingual" approach introduced by Kopeliovich (2013). Within this strategy, code-switching happens organically, and Participant 3 herself engages in code-switching with her children. Therefore, parent-child interactions within this family are more aligned with bilingual discourse strategies proposed by Lanza (2007). However, interactions between the father and his children tend to lean towards the monolingual end of the spectrum, given his lack of proficiency in Spanish.

Similar to Families 1 and 2, the parents in Family 3 employ audiovisual media and English-language books to foster their children's English development. However, in this family, the use of books extends to both English and Spanish, distinguishing it from Family 2 where books are primarily in English. Once again, the use of audiovisual media, movies, TV, and books emerges as a recurring pattern across all three families, indicating a common trend among them. This aligns with the findings of King and Fogle (2009) and Akgül et al. (2017) in their respective research.

The first sub-question proposed in this research pertained to how parents' attitudes towards English and Spanish affected the measures they implemented to promote bilingualism. All participants express a strong sense of comfort when communicating in English. While Participants 1 and 3 feel equally comfortable in both Spanish and English, Participant 2 exhibits a stronger preference for English. This shared comfort with the minority language influences parents' choices, and it facilitates the implementation of measures that encourage the use of English at home.

As previously mentioned, Participants 1 and 3 feel equally comfortable in Spanish and English and regularly use both with their children. In contrast, Participant 2's inclination towards English is evident in his consistent use of it at home, without incorporating Spanish in interactions with his daughter.

Furthermore, all three participants express remarkably positive attitudes towards bilingualism. They emphasize that being proficient in two or more languages opens up myriad opportunities for their children's professional and personal lives. This outlook on the benefits of bilingualism aligns with the findings in a study conducted by Akgül et al. in 2017. In this research, parents who chose to raise bilingual children in their native country placed significant importance on factors related to the child. For them, bilingualism served as a valuable tool for the child's professional development, emphasizing the globalized nature of the world and its impact on future career advancement.

Moving along, the second sub-question of this research attempted to answer how these parents' definition of bilingualism influenced the measures they implemented to promote it in their children. The interviews uncovered a common emphasis on daily language exposure. Participant 1 views a bilingual person as someone who comfortably uses two languages daily. Participant 2 emphasizes the ability to navigate day-to-day situations in both languages with ease, while Participant 3 defines a bilingual person as someone exposed to two languages daily. The common element across these definitions is the importance of daily language use and exposure.

For all three parents, the paramount aspect of bilingualism is ensuring their children's daily exposure to both languages. This shared perspective directly shapes the measures they implement. Each parent actively ensures that their children engage with both languages daily,

enabling them to navigate routine interactions effortlessly. Contrary to findings in Akgul et al.'s study (2017), which emphasized bilingual literacy for parents living in their own country, these parents prioritize language acquisition over biliteracy. The context of Paraguay, where English is readily available as a foreign language, likely plays a role in this discrepancy. In this environment, biliteracy could be potentially attained in schools, leading parents to prioritize daily language exposure and acquisition at home.

The third and final sub-question concerned the extent in which code-switching occurred among the participants' children. This linguistic phenomenon slightly varies across the three families. In Family 1, the children engage in daily code-switching between Spanish and English, particularly with their father, who predominantly speaks English with them. Since the mother is not proficient in English, it leads to code-switching becoming a common and natural practice for the children in this family.

Conversely, in Family 2, the daughter employs minimal use of code-switching, and only for humorous purposes. Expressing a preference for English and being proficient in the language, she sporadically switches between English and Spanish with her parents, reserving code-switching for moments of humor rather than a regular means of communication.

In Family 3, the children frequently code-switch between English and Spanish, influenced by their mother's frequent use of this linguistic practice. Lanza's (2007) explanation of the move-on strategy and code-switching discourse strategy is relevant here, where the parent continues the conversation in the language the child initiated, often incorporating code-switching.

Chapter V

5. Conclusions

Given the rapid growth of globalization and interconnectedness, now more than ever the world at large is realizing the advantages that bilingualism brings about. Due to this, an increasing number of caregivers who are bilingual are implementing certain language practices at home in order to raise bilingual children. In this context. Family Language Policy takes the center stage to better understand the decisions and practices parents are implementing to promote bilingualism in their children.

The first sub-question examined the impact of parents' attitudes toward English and Spanish on the strategies employed to foster bilingualism. All participants conveyed a high level of comfort when communicating in English, which leads to their willingness to implement the language at home. Participants 1 and 3 expressed an equal comfort level in both languages, which can be evidenced in their frequent code-switching. In contrast, Participant 2 exhibited a stronger preference for English, potentially explaining the absence of code-switching between English and Spanish in his home interactions.

Furthermore, the second sub-question looked at how parents' definition of bilingualism influenced the measures they implemented to promote bilingualism. To answer it, the interviewees provided their individual definitions of bilingualism, emphasizing the paramount role of daily language use and exposure. These definitions significantly impact the measures adopted by the parents, as all three participants ensure daily exposure and communication in the minority language for their children.

Moreover, the third sub-question explored the use of code-switching by the participants' children. This language phenomenon displays slight differences among the three families. In

Family 1, the children regularly switch between Spanish and English, especially with their father. On the contrary, in Family 2, the daughter employs code-switching minimally, using it only for humorous purposes. In Family 3, the children frequently engage in code-switching between English and Spanish, a pattern influenced by their mother's consistent use of this linguistic practice.

Finally, the main research question inquired about the strategies these parents implemented to promote bilingualism in their children. Family 1 utilizes the One Parent-One Language approach, where the majority language (Spanish) is stronger. During parent-child interactions, Participant 1 employs bilingual discourse strategies, such as code-switching and the "move on" strategy. Conversely, Family 2 takes a different route: the Minority Language at Home strategy. Parent-child interactions tend to fall within the monolingual end of discourse strategies, which is done to encourage the child's active use of the minority language. Furthermore, Family 3 uses a mixed strategy, which is more relaxed and determined by whatever language context occurs at a given moment. Similarly to the first family, parent-child interactions fall into the bilingual end of the spectrum, as the mother code-switches regularly with her children. Lastly, a common trend among the three families is that they all make use of audiovisual media, books, and music in order to promote the minority language at home.

5.1. Implications

While the field of FLP has been extensively studied and researched in other communities, Paraguay remains the exception. Given its official status as a bilingual country, the study of FLP assumes particular importance in the national context. The present study sought to pioneer research in the field of FLP in Paraguay, examining the Spanish-English bilingual practices of three families. It is imperative that local researchers delve deeper into this field of study,

introducing a distinctive Paraguayan perspective to this phenomenon. By bringing the Paraguayan context to the forefront, the study contributes to a more inclusive and diversified understanding of FLP. Moreover, the study's significance extends to its role in uncovering potential similarities and disparities in cultural attitudes toward language and bilingualism. Paraguay, with its distinct cultural fabric, presents a valuable case study for exploring how FLP operates in a context shaped by different historical and sociocultural influences.

5.2. Recommendations and further studies

The intention is for this study to serve as a gateway, opening avenues for future research in the field of FLP. Moreover, studies should not only be limited to English and Spanish, but they should also extend to Guarani-Spanish as well. The overarching goal of FLP research is to gain a deeper understanding of how families utilize language in their day-to-day contexts, which are insights that are crucial for understanding the reasons behind the decline in Guarani usage among younger generations. By identifying effective measures to encourage the use of this native language within households, it could be possible to prevent its decline and potential extinction, preserving it as a living language in Paraguay.

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Appendixes

Appendix A - Questions for the Interviews

- How would you define the term “bilingual”?
- Do you consider yourself to be bilingual?
- If yes, how did you become bilingual?
- How do you feel about being bilingual?
- Is being bilingual important to you? Why?
- Which language do you feel most comfortable using in general?
- Why did you decide to raise a bilingual child?
- Why is it important to you that your child grows up bilingual?
- Have you read any books, articles, magazines or watched any videos about raising bilingual children? That is, did you do any research on bilingual child rearing?
- What language/languages do you use to communicate with your child?
- If you use more than one, when do you use each of them?
- What language does the parent of your child use to communicate with them?
- What language do you use to communicate with the parent of your child?
- What are the strategies that you implement to encourage bilingualism in your child?
- Is your child able to speak both Spanish and English? Or do they understand both but only speak one?
- What language does your child prefer to use?
- Do you generally switch between languages when speaking to your child? Or are you strict about using only one language with them?
- Does the child have any contact with English outside of their home?

- Does the child attend a bilingual school/daycare center?
- Does your child "mix" languages in the same conversation?
- In what language does your child consume media? That is, music, videos, movies, TV shows, books.
- What language does the child use to communicate with their friends and extended family?
- How do you handle social situations outside of your home? That is, what language do you use with the child in family reunions, social gatherings, parties, etc?
- Has the child ever traveled to an English-speaking country? If so, for how long? What was the child's communication like over there?
- What would you say have been the biggest challenges of raising a bilingual child?

Questions to add if the interviewee has older children

- Can the child read and write in both Spanish and English?
- According to your perception, how has your child's English use changed over time?