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EXPERIENCES OF BEING BILINGUAL: SEVEN FRENCH AND SPANISH-SPEAKING  
FAMILIES IN KENT

by

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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dedicated with much love to  
my “two favourite daughters”,  
Jemima and Kezia

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Abstract**

This study is an exploration of familial bilingualism in which I examined the reported experiences of a small group of bilingual family members who live in the South of England and whose heritage languages are French or Spanish. The study, located in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, draws upon the main fields of bilingualism, second language acquisition, language ideologies, family language policies, as well as bilingualism and emotions. It offers evidence of the difficulties to transmit heritage languages and implement familial bilingualism because of a mixture of intertwined ideological and practical factors.

Having experienced familial bilingualism, I was interested in understanding the meaning that familial bilingualism had for other families and how familial bilingualism subjectively affected family members in their everyday lives and in their interactions at home and in society. To conduct the study, I adopted an interpretative approach in which I tried to derive context-situated interpretations from the narratives of my participants. Thus, my data enabled me to examine the complexity of maintaining and transmitting heritage languages within families.

The data highlighted the strong link between familial bilingualism and society as the heritage languages of the participants could be construed as social capital that the parents had to transmit in order to be “good parents”. The data also highlighted the complex relationships between bilingualism and emotions not only at societal level but also at individual and familial levels. The salient emotions revealed in the data comprise feelings of responsibility about maintaining and transmitting heritage languages as well as feelings of insecurity and isolation generated by migrating and belonging to bilingual families.

A greater understanding of familial bilingualism and how families view their languages as lenses through which they negotiate family and societal relations, as well as emotions and education, is not simply an academic exercise but is arguably of importance to all of us, given the world in which we live, with diversity and migration featuring as major political and ideological issues.

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## Chapter one

### A personal interest in familial bilingualism

My somewhat dogged insistence that my interlocutors keep to the subject of language was defeated time and time again. Only later did I realise that these speakers' evading of my questions about language in order to talk about immigration, culture, family conflict, social and political dilemmas, constituted, in fact, and significantly, answers to my questions. (Miller, 1983, p.17, cited in Dewaele et al., 2003, p.14)

#### 1.1. Introduction

This quote from an earlier scholar into bilingualism reflects some of what I have experienced in my exploration of familial bilingualism. Being a bilingual parent who speaks several languages, I am fascinated by the challenges of bilingual families and how they manage to maintain and transmit their heritage languages.

Today an increasing number of people are migrating within Europe and worldwide. According to the latest Eurostat statistics, during 2013, 1.2 million European citizens migrated within Europe making the most of the freedom of movement (Eurostat, 2015). These migrations together with European exchanges, such as the educational Erasmus programme, facilitate "European intra-marriages" between nationals of different European countries, who go on to form new families, and in particular euro-families (Gaspar, 2009). However, the children born in euro-families, who may hear more than one language at home, do not automatically become bilingual or multilingual. Raising children bilingually is hard work and it is a choice that families make depending on their histories, their attitudes to bilingualism and life circumstances. In this study, I examine what a small group of bilingual family members say about their experiences of familial bilingualism.

In this introductory chapter, I describe the study and state its research focus. I then reveal some personal information to position myself in the study and explain my motivation to research the topic. I also briefly mention three language memoirs that contributed to my interest in the topic. Finally, I give a complete outline of the thesis.

In the rest of the study, I use the term "bilingualism" to refer generically to both bilingualism and multilingualism and the term "bilingual" to refer to bilingual and

multilingual. I use the term "parents" to speak of the parents and close caregivers who may stand in for the parents. I use the term "heritage" language to talk about the languages that the parents wish to transmit to their children, which, in this study, were French, Spanish. It was also English for the families who had experienced familial bilingualism when they lived outside of the UK.

## **1.2. A brief description of the thesis**

The thesis is a qualitative one, which draws on a small number of interpretivist research theories (Creswell, 1998; 2007; 2008; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; 2000) and uses a hybrid methodology broadly informed by grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1999; Charmaz, 2006) and phenomenological perspectives (Smith et al., 2009).

The broad focus of the study is to explore how a small number of members of bilingual families are affected by familial bilingualism. The study focuses on the "lived experiences" of the participants (Merleau-Ponty, 2014; Husserl, 1999) who at the time of the interviews, lived in the South of England and used French or Spanish at home, although some of the participants talked about experiences of familial bilingualism outside of the UK.

## **1.3. The research focus**

The broad aim of the study is to contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon of familial bilingualism in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, in the fields of language ideologies, family language policies, as well as bilingualism and emotions, a relatively recent area of interest developed by Pavlenko (2008a) in her influential book *Emotions and Multilingualism*.

In this study, I try to address how my participants understand their experiences of familial bilingualism at a practical level (doing familial bilingualism inside and outside the home) and at a more existential level (coping with being bilingual family members) in order to obtain a holistic representation of the phenomenon.

The three initial questions of the study were very broad and centred around the meaning, the challenges and issues, and the emotional impact that familial bilingualism had on the participants. They were broadly formulated as:

- How do bilingual families perceive, value and understand themselves as bilingual families?
- What are the challenges and issues in developing bilingual families and family language policies?

- What emotional impact does raising bilingual children or being raised bilingually have on the members of bilingual families?

In the analysis of data, I concentrate on the themes that were most developed by the participants. The data on the challenges, issues and impact of familial bilingualism were very much entangled. In chapters six and seven, I analyse what the participants say about their own bilingualism and the bilingualism of their children. This includes acquiring and transmitting languages and experiences of school education. After a long analysis of the data, my interest focused on trying to understand the nature of the emotional impact the participants referred to. In the data, the parents seem to talk about emotions that are linked to familial or social relationships. A lot of these emotions, which are examined in chapter eight, seem to have to do with feelings of responsibility, insecurity and isolation. Thus, in this study, I try to provide an in-depth look at familial bilingualism through an exploration of what it means for my participants to be bilingual in a family context and in society.

I hope to add to the body of knowledge about language ideologies by examining the participants' language beliefs and understanding of bilingualism. I also hope to add to the area of family language policies by examining experiences of family language planning and lastly, I hope to highlight what it may mean to be bilingual emotionally, within families and individually, by focusing on some of the emotions that emerge from the data.

As nearly all the families in the study are composed of two parents who are mostly nationals of European countries and were living in Europe at the time of the interviews, this study might be relevant to the research on European mixed-nationality families. It might contribute to an understanding of the experiences of bilingual mixed-nationality families at a time when an increasing number of people are migrating within Europe. At a local level, the study might be of interest to parents and professionals who deal with French and Spanish-speaking families in Kent. However, I am aware that my findings, by their very nature, cannot be generalised.

#### **1.4. My motivation to research familial bilingualism**

Like most researchers in the field of familial bilingualism, I have a personal interest in the topic. I have experienced being raised in a bilingual family and raising bilingual children. However, unlike most researchers, who document experiences of “harmonious bilingual development”, my two experiences of familial bilingualism might pass as less harmonious (De Houwer, 2009b, p.308; 2013) because they have resulted in receptive

bilingualism, a form of bilingualism in which one of the language is understood but not spoken.

Bilingualism seems to be very intriguing to monolinguals and I have often been asked whether my children can speak French. In general, my interlocutors seem disappointed when I answer that my children do not speak French fluently. There seems to be a tacit consensus that being bilingual English-French is a good thing and that I should have made more of an effort to transmit my first language. Until now, this has always rendered me rather defensive because it seems to question my role as a parent. This is the reason why I am interested in investigating what other parents say about their experiences of familial bilingualism and how they view their role and responsibilities as parents of bilingual children. Intrigued by my own emotional reactions, I was interested in the kind of emotions that I would find in the data.

Additionally, when my children were young I tried to get some information on familial bilingualism and the books I read on the topic all seemed to designate the same strategy as the panacea for success. In this strategy, called the “one parent, one language”, each individual parent speaks only one language to the child, usually their first language so that the child associates and uses a specific language with each parent (De Houwer, 2009b; Baker, 2014). However, the books I read seemed to fall short of explaining what to do if the parent did not manage to raise their children bilingually. In addition, the books did not seem to give much information about how to manage the emotional aspect of raising children bilingually. Fortunately, this aspect of bilingualism is now being addressed in the literature. De Houwer (2006; 2009a; 2009b; 2013), for example, acknowledges that emotions form part of the experience of familial bilingualism and gives some advice to the parents.

Lastly, I am aware that I need to position myself more precisely in the research to expose my biases and help my readers make sense of my interpretation of the data, which aims to be an interpretation of how the participants seem to interpret their own experiences (Creswell, 2007). I understand that my personal and cultural experiences will shape my interpretation of the data and agree with Denzin and Lincoln (2000) that a researcher should:

understand that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting. (ibid. p.9)

Therefore, in the next section, I will briefly sum up my two personal experiences of childhood and adult familial bilingualism. I will then mention three language memoirs that have played a part in my motivation to research familial bilingualism.

I was born in a French-Spanish Catalan family, in Toulouse, a town that accommodates the biggest Spanish community in France. This community was formed by the exile of hundreds of thousands of Spanish refugees during the Spanish civil war. Once in France, most of these refugees maintained their language and culture (Jornet, 2005). They spoke Spanish or Catalan, which is one of the Spanish regional languages that were banned during the Spanish dictatorship. For the Spanish exiles in Toulouse, it was natural to continue to speak their first language at home and with their friends. Thus, the two languages of my family were French through my mother and Catalan through my father. My father, who was schooled in Spanish before leaving Cataluña as a child, went on to learn French in school and quickly became proficient in French. However, my grandparents only spoke Catalan although they understood French. They relied on a group of Catalan exiles for their social life and on the younger generations to act as interpreters when necessary.

In the France of the sixties, Catalan was considered a dialect (Martinet, 1960, cited in Romaine, 1995, p.28). In France, regional languages such as Catalan were only recognised on the 23 July 2008, by the article 75-1 of the constitutional law, which states that regional languages belong to the patrimony of France. Therefore, for my mother, who was French and struggled with the stigma of having married a Spanish immigrant, Catalan was not a language worth transmitting. She stopped me from speaking Catalan at home and as a result, I developed receptive bilingualism. I understood Catalan but only spoke French to my grandparents although my grandparents only spoke Catalan to me. Incidentally, this arrangement fitted perfectly with the policy of acculturation of the French République of the sixties, which used to integrate its immigrants through the common use of the French language taught in the schools of the République (Berry, 1997). This policy supposedly enabled immigrants to benefit from both their culture of origin and the receiving culture (Berry, 1990).

As a child, I never questioned the way my family communicated and why I had to communicate in French with my grandparents. To me, Catalan was a “family” language which had little reality outside my family environment, to echo the terminology used by Rodriguez (1982, p.5) in his language memoir about growing up in America in a Mexican family. Other aspects of my childhood experiences of familial bilingualism are similar to the experiences of Rodriguez (1982, p.56) who, for example, describes being embarrassed



by the difficulties of his parents to communicate with figures of authority in a second language.

For me, growing up in a bilingual family also meant having two separate cultures and I found the experience of growing up biculturally challenging. In my family, there were some cultural tensions between my mother, who represented France, and my grandparents, who represented Cataluña (Norton, 2000). Both my mother and my grandparents would openly criticise each other's cultures and I would be caught in the middle wondering about my identity as I was described as being half-French and half-Catalan. Therefore, my childhood experience of familial bilingualism was about much more than having two languages and generated emotions that had to do with integration and identity. As a result, I have never felt locally rooted possibly because of the circumstances of my family's immigration. I seem to have developed what Huston and Sebban (1986), commenting on their own exiles to France from Algeria and Canada define as "a natural disposition for exile" (ibid. p.51).

Therefore, having married an Englishman, I migrated to England without dwelling too much on the prospect of living in another country and endorsing another culture. Besides, I was already fluent in English. However, I am still experiencing anxious stages of inadequacy when using English especially when I am tired or stressed (Dewaele, 2007). My English has fossilised which means that I am not making any more progress in English despite being immersed in the language and interacting in English (Han, 2003; 2004). In addition, I have a foreign accent, which signals me as a foreigner (Piller, 2002b; 2013).

I have two teenage daughters who were born in England and have lived in England all their lives. Initially, I did not reflect too much about the issues of familial bilingualism. I seem to have naively assumed that my daughters would automatically pick up French because I was speaking French to them. However, with little support from my family and confronted with the early reluctance of my daughters to use French I ended up speaking English to them. I cannot say that my daughters, who studied French in school, speak French fluently. In addition, I am now the "foreign other" of my children (Holliday et al., 2004, p.2) who consider themselves English while I am French to them.

Additionally, I have always been interested in what we transmit emotionally to our children. I believe that any parent, monolingual or bilingual, transmit more to their children through language that may first appear. In the same way, as there is a cultural or social capital (Bourdieu, 2001), I believe that parents transmit an emotional capital to their children (Honneth, 2005). For me, this is poignantly evidenced in the memoirs written by the children of Holocaust survivors for example. Hoffman's sequel, *After that knowledge* (2004), sheds a new light on the lived experiences she described in *Lost in*

Translation (1989), her much cited-language memoir. The sequel illuminates the dynamics of her family and in particular her relationship with her mother. Personally, I have often wondered whether speaking English to my children might affect our relationships. These concerns explain why I tentatively tried to situate the research in the context of emotions and relationships.

In short, my two personal experiences of familial bilingualism have been very different and I am aware that they represent isolated experiences. However, they enabled me to understand the experiences of some of my participants on issues such as the importance of historical and sociological contexts, the use of regional languages as well as issues of identity. In addition, I hope that my personal experiences have enabled me to listen to my participants with more empathy and interpret their words sympathetically (Kvale, 1996).

Lastly, I have always been interested in contemporary historical and biographical narratives including language memoirs. For Schrauf (2000), language memoirs are a literary genre, which taps into the realm of identity, which is at the core of language and being. Therefore, language memoirs can greatly enrich our understanding of the lives of bilinguals and help other bilinguals make sense of their own lived experiences. For this study, I have read several narratives on familial bilingualism because, for a time, I considered using narrative as a source of data. However, I have chosen only to mention three narratives in this introduction because I consider that these narratives resonate with my lived experience and they played a part in my motivation to study familial bilingualism.

The first book, Makine's *Le testament français* (1995), echoed strongly with me when I read it in the nineties. In the book, a French grandmother in exile in Russia is passing on her language and culture to her grandson who is totally isolated from her lived experiences and views her as an extraordinary character who has led an incredible adventurous life. Like Makine's narrator, I can remember being captivated by the tales of my much-loved grandmother who had been involved in the political turmoil of the first half of the 20th century. The book is relevant because it reveals how bilingualism is so much more than language transmission. It is also about cultural transmission and importantly about emotions. And indeed, in my study, some participants evoke close relatives who lived through periods of conflicts and talk emotionally of their subsequent exiles.

The second book, Eva Hoffman's *Lost in translation* (1989), is very significant because of its depiction of an experience of exile. The book, which has been intensely scrutinised by researchers (Besemeres, 2002; Wierzbicka, 2004; Pavlenko, 2001b; 2007;

Besemeres and Wierzbicka, 2007; Kramersch, 2007; 2009; De Courtivron, 2009), relates the story of its author, who as a Polish teenager starts a new life in Canada. It contains very precise observations on the whole experience of bilingualism and biculturalism, and in particular of familial bilingualism. For this study, I am particularly interested in the passages in which Hoffman talks about her struggles with acquiring her new language, her identity and her relationships within the family and in society. In addition, I am interested in what Hoffman says about her parents on the issue of parenting in a foreign country.

The theme of parenting is also present in the third book by Huston and Sebbar entitled *Lettres parisiennes, Autopsie de l'exil* (1986). The book reads like a conversation between two bilingual and bicultural writers who are also mothers. Leila Sebbar is of Algerian-French descent and Nancy Huston is British Canadian. Both authors talk at length about their own childhood experiences of bilingualism and about their experiences of raising bilingual and bicultural children. I am interested in the fact that both writers have had experiences of childhood bilingualism and that they are both questioning how they parent their bilingual children. In the book, the authors question their places in society as women and as mothers. For me, the book is important because it is not a textbook narrative of how to raise bilingual children but, on the contrary, a string of interrogations about how to be a “good enough” bilingual parent (Winnicott, 1973). The book depicts very realistically the emotional turmoil that exile and bilingualism have generated in both authors.

There is a plethora of language memoirs. Although some of the experiences of bilingualism and biculturalism might seem universal, language memoirs, as contextualised testimonies, demonstrate how each experience is unique. They also show the impact that ideologies of language and identity might have on the language acquisition and use of the language of particular individuals (Pavlenko, 1997; 2001a; 2003; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2001; 2004). They enable readers to challenge concepts of “native speakerness” or “language competence” (Kramersch, 1997; 2009). For example, Sebbar’s (2007) account enables readers to comprehend the struggle that second-generation Franco-Algerian children, like her, have had with both their mother-tongue (French) and father-tongue (Arabic), in a context in which Arabic was totally devalued in favour of French. French was imposed on Algerians during the French colonisation and this event went on affecting the next generations of Algerians (Derrida, 1996; 2000; Sebbar, 2003; Bourget, 2006; Djebbar, 2007).

## **1.5. Contents of the chapters**

This study contains nine chapters. In the introduction, as seen above, I describe the study and my personal motivation to undertake the research. I present my experiences of familial bilingualism and three language memoirs that were pivotal in my interest in familial bilingualism.

In the following three literature chapters, I review the multidisciplinary literature relevant to the topic of familial bilingualism in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. I examine what research in second language acquisition, childhood bilingualism and language ideologies says about bilingual language development and the strategies that the parents can implement to raise their children bilingually (Chapter two). I then examine what research in family language policies says about bilingual culture and identity (Chapter three). And to finish, I examine what research in bilingualism and emotion says about the emotional impact of bilingualism with a special focus on emotion and society (Chapter four).

In Chapter five, I briefly present the literature on research and methodology that helped me design my own methodology. I proceed to describe the latter including the choices I made and try to address some of my methodological concerns. To finish, I include a brief presentation of all my participants.

Next, the analysis of data is composed of three chapters. In chapter six, entitled “The parents’ language beliefs and understanding of familial bilingualism”, I examine the data on the language acquisition of the parents and the parents’ motivation to raise their children bilingually. In chapter seven, entitled “The parents’ challenges and issues in developing bilingual families and family language policies”, I examine the strategies that the parents implement to transmit the heritage languages. In chapter eight, entitled “The emotional impact of implementing familial bilingualism”, I examine the findings on emotions including the feelings of responsibility, insecurity and isolation that come out in the data.

The concluding chapter reviews the key findings of the thesis, identifies the contributions of the study to the existing fields, the shortcomings of the study, and suggests directions for future research.

## Chapter two

### Conceptualisation of bilingualism, bilingual language acquisition, and language ideologies

Even though the phenomenon is widespread, bilingualism is surrounded by a number of myths: bilinguals are rare and have equal and perfect knowledge of their languages; real bilinguals have acquired their two or more languages in childhood and have no accent in either of them; ...switching between languages is a sign of laziness in bilinguals... bilingualism will delay language acquisition in children and have negative effects on their development; if you want your child to grow bilingual, use the one person-one language approach; children being raised bilingual will always mix their languages; and so on. (Grosjean, 2010, p.xv)

#### 2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on some of the themes about bilingual language development that arose from the data. I investigated these themes in the literature of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics related to second language acquisition, childhood bilingualism and language ideologies to understand the experiences of familial bilingualism of my participants. In the data, my participants talked a lot about what bilingualism represented for them. Although they had different concepts of bilingualism based on their individual experiences, all the participants seemed to evoke the same related issues of language competence, code switching and cognition, which are developed in the first part of this chapter. My participants also talked a lot about how they had acquired their second languages and how they were trying to maintain and transmit their heritage languages to their children, which are developed in the second part of this chapter.

Some of the references I use in the three chapters of the literature review may seem a bit dated. However, I have chosen to include them in the chapters as the research they refer to is still abundantly cited today and continue to inform the research on bilingualism. I align with Grosjean (2010) who justifies using older references because according to him, they “set the stage for my generation, and for the one following mine” (ibid. p. xix). Equally, I extend “the notion of bilingualism to those who use two or more languages on a regular basis” (ibid. p.4) as this is the case for most of my participants. In this study, I am mostly interested in the use of two languages in the families.

## 2.2. Conceptualisation of bilingualism

### 2.2.1. Definitions of bilingualism

Bilingualism is a difficult concept to define and understandably, my participants struggled to conceptualise bilingualism. This made me examine how bilingualism is generally defined in the literature and I noted that definitions are multiple and not always useful. I also noted that there are many myths or misconceptions about bilingualism (Sorace, 2006; Grosjean, 2010; 2015; De Houwer, 2009b; Baker 2011; Tokuhama-Espinosa 2013, Genesee, 2013). These myths are very common in the general public and were also present in my data. In the next section, I look at how bilingualism has been conceptualised in the literature to show how some of the definitions of bilingualism seem to have enabled the development of some of the myths of bilingualism.

To start with, the definition of bilingualism is rather problematic in the literature of bilingualism (Baetens Beardsmore, 1986, p.1) because there is either a multiplication, or an absence of definition that make research on bilingualism appear rather opaque (Sia and Dewaele, 2006). Inversely, when defined, bilingualism can seem over-defined. There is a plethora of general definitions (Baetens Beardsmore, 1986; Hamers and Blanc, 1989; Romaine, 1995; Baker, 2011) that seem to be lacking in precision such as the following definition:

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, 1957, cited in Baetens Beardsmore, 1986, p.1)

There are also definitions on very specific dimensions of bilingualism such as Pohl's typologies of bilingualism in the following example:

Horizontal bilingualism occurs in situations where two distinct languages have an equivalent status in the official, cultural and family life of a group of speakers and is mostly found, according to Pohl, among upper-level speakers such as the educated Fleming in Brussels (using Dutch and French), the Catalans (using Catalan and Spanish), and certain Québécois (using French and English). Although such speakers might functionally differentiate their language usage, there could also be considerable overlapping where either language might be used in very similar circumstances. (Pohl, 1965, cited in Baetens Breadsmore 1986, p. 5)

On the other hand, there can be a total absence of definition because readers are supposed to know what constitutes bilingualism (Dewaele et al., 2003).

Although information on bilingualism filters down to the public through parental guidebooks and increasingly the internet in the form of blogs created by parents of bilingual children and researchers, there are still persistent misconceptions about bilingualism, which affect the views of the general public. Some misconceptions seem to stem directly from the terminology that has been used in the literature to describe bilinguals. This terminology seems to have reinforced the bias that exists towards monolingualism considered as the norm. In the terminology of bilingualism, a bilingual is often described as a bi-person either a “bi-speaker” or a “bi-user”. And this seems to imply that a bilingual has to be two monolingual persons in one (Kramsch, 2009; 2012c). For a long time, bilinguals were systematically compared to monolinguals. This gave rise to definitions of bilinguals as “two monolinguals in one body” or “the sum of two monolinguals”, challenged by Grosjean (1982, 1989) and other authors (Hamers and Blanc, 1989; Cook, 2001; Pavlenko, 2011).

One of the main misconceptions of bilingualism is that bilinguals should be equally competent in their two languages. This misconception is crucial because it touches on levels of proficiency. It affects how bilinguals are perceived and very importantly how bilinguals perceive themselves in terms of language competence. Bloomfield’s definition of bilingualism as “a native-like control of two languages” (Bloomfield, 1933, p.55 cited in Chin and Wigglesworth 2007, p.5) was extremely influential. It seems to have paved the way for the misconstrued ideal of bilingual equal competence. The misconception that bilingual should be equally competent in their two languages still seems to prevail in the mythology of bilingualism (De Houwer, 2009b). De Houwer, who works on bilingual childhood language acquisition, claims that the bias towards monolingualism still needs to be challenged. For her, this bias creates an “ideal in mind of the bilingual as two highly proficient monolinguals in one who can do everything in both languages” (ibid. p.310) which is detrimental to how bilingualism is perceived by parents, teachers and children alike. For the author, this bias can affect the “harmonious” development of bilingual children (De Houwer, 2006; 2009b; 2013).

Bloomfield’s definition was challenged because it was too extreme (Chin and Wigglesworth, 2007). It seems to rest heavily on comparing the language competence of bilinguals and monolinguals without considering that monolinguals are different because they only use one language. This might have stemmed from earlier research on bilingualism, which systematically compared bilingual children to monolingual children (De Houwer, 2009b). Ronjat (1913), one of the earliest researchers in childhood bilingualism, who is abundantly cited in the literature of bilingualism, compared the language development of his son, Louis, to that of a monolingual child. Louis was raised

bilingually by his parents who followed the “one parent, one language” (OPOL) approach very strictly. Both of his parents, as well as his family circle, only used their first language with him. Louis’ two languages were kept separate which enabled Ronjat to compare his son’s language development with that of a monolingual child. I would argue that Ronjat’s research, although dated, is relevant for my study because it also highlights the dedication and competitiveness of some bilingual parents. In his book, Ronjat also compares his son to other bilingual children. There is a competitive undertone in his comments that recalls the tone used by some of today’s parents in internet forums. These parents, like most of the parents in my study, are often from socio-economic privileged groups who like Ronjat are very supportive of their children’s bilingualism (Ronjat, 1913, p.2; Hamers and Blanc, 1989) although they are not representative of all the parents of bilingual children. Early studies of bilingualism were criticised for ignoring socio-economic factors.

Today, bilingualism tends to be generally defined as “the use of two or more languages (or dialects) by the same individual in their everyday lives” (Grosjean, 2010, p.4). Li Wei and Moyer (2008) go further and define a bilingual person as “someone in possession of two languages” (ibid. p.6), which is the definition that I would like to retain for this thesis.

### **2.2.2. Language competence**

Having established that monolingualism should not be the yardstick for bilingualism, I now look in more depth at what differentiates bilinguals from monolinguals. In this section, I revisit language competence.

To start with, bilinguals can use two languages. For Grosjean (1982), “using two or more languages in one’s everyday life is as natural to the bilingual as using one language is to the monolingual” (p.viii). Bilinguals can discriminate between their two languages. They know how to use their two languages in real communication situations (Hymes, 1975, cited in Hagège 1996; Blom and Gumperz, 2000; Li Wei, 2008), whether they are having a conversation, reading a menu or taking part in a political debate. Consequently, bilinguals do not have to be equally proficient or competent in their two languages because they have different communicative needs in their two languages (Grosjean, 1982; 2010; 2015). Grosjean (1982) suggests that there is a dynamic complementary principle according to which bilinguals acquire and use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. As Grosjean (1982, p.236) puts it:



In the end, fluency in each of the four basic skills in the two languages is determined primarily by language use, and in turn, language use is determined by need. If a particular skill is not needed, it will not be developed or, if it has already been acquired, it will wither away.

According to Pavlenko (2008a), the competence and performance of bilinguals are always different from that of monolinguals because they live their lives differently “through the means of two languages” independently of the length of time, that they have spent in the country of their second language (*ibid.* p.11). Bilinguals may need to be able to speak and write a language (active bilingualism) or to listen and read it (passive bilingualism). Depending on the context and topic, bilinguals may also prefer to use one of their two languages (Blom and Gumperz, 2000, cited in Li Wei, 2000, p.111). For example, Burck (2003), a Dutch academic living in Quebec reveals that she uses Dutch in her family relationships, English in her everyday life and her research, and French to swear. She reports having been unable to give a presentation in Dutch, in the Netherlands, because she just could not use Dutch in an academic context.

The language competence of the bilinguals is often described in terms of dominance. Thus, bilinguals who supposedly have equal knowledge of their two languages (Hamers and Blanc, 1989), although they may not necessarily pass for native speakers in either language (Spolsky, 1998), are said to be “balanced” (Baker, 2011, p.9). However, the balance of competence is fragile and it can change over time. Active bilinguals who do not have enough opportunities to use a language may become passive or receptive bilinguals because they are no longer able to speak one their languages although they still understand it (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003). Equally, bilinguals can become dominant in particular aspects of any of their two languages (Grosjean, 1998, 2010; Chin and Wigglesworth, 2007; Pavlenko 2008a; Baker, 2011).

Bilingualism is thus relative. Mackey claims that the point “at which a speaker of a second language becomes bilingual is either arbitrary or impossible to determine” (Mackey, 1956, cited in Li Wei, 2000, p.22). Instead of speaking of equal competence, researchers now prefer to speak of a continuum of competence, which ranges from monolingualism to bilingualism (De Houwer, 2009b). Most bilinguals are positioned in the middle (Bialystok, 2001; Carlson and Meltzoff, 2008). Life circumstances can affect the continuum of competence. For example, if a child acquires a second language at nursery after having acquired a first language at home (additive bilingualism), the first language may continue to develop provided the child continues to use it at home most of the time (Cummins, 1979; De Houwer, 1995; 1998; 2009b). Inversely, if the child does not use the first language enough at home, the second language will become dominant

(subtractive bilingualism). The first language may even stop developing (Cummins, 1979, Ligthbown and Spada, 2006). Subtractive bilingualism often happens when the first language of the home is not socio-culturally valued (Hamers and Blanc, 1989) such as in cases of dialects which are considered to have less prestige and are not supported through school and the mass media (Li Wei, 2000).

As a consequence of becoming dominant in a second language, bilinguals who use two languages may have trouble using their first language. They may experience attrition, which is the inhibitory loss of certain language skills. They may find it difficult to use vocabulary and language structures as well as making conceptual distinctions (Bardovi - Harling and Stringer, 2010). Attrition is a normal phenomenon of bilingualism that is due to a decreasing exposure to and opportunities to use that language (Ecke, 2004; Köpke and Schmid, 2004; Köpke et al., 2007; Ng and Wigglesworth, 2007). Köpke et al. (2007, p.39) found that:

Although attrition is generally considered to be a phenomenon distinct from acquisition, experienced by specific types of populations, it might also be thought of as a normal part of the acquisition process, affecting the development of most (perhaps all) L2 learners. From a broad perspective, most learners go through periods in which their use of the language declines—for weeks, months, or years—even if the general process of acquisition subsequently continues. On closer inspection, even in periods of continuous use of the L2, not all aspects of language knowledge are regularly exercised, so that whereas gains are made in some areas, loss may be simultaneously incurred in others.

For Grosjean (2014), language attrition is a common phenomenon of bilingualism that can be quite upsetting for bilinguals. In the data, for example, Julie, one of my participants, who experienced attrition in English speaks of her joy at recovering that language with the help of the social network. Another characteristic phenomenon of bilingualism which can be upsetting is fossilisation. Fossilisation is characterised by the “cessation of learning (b) despite continuous exposure to input, adequate motivation to learn, and sufficient opportunity to practice” (Han, 2003, p.115). Second language users who experience fossilisation make incorrect uses of the language. These uses often become habits that are very hard to correct.

Today, rather than comparing bilinguals to monolinguals, the literature tends to regard bilinguals as unique speakers with complete individual linguistic systems (Grosjean, 1982, 2010; De Houwer, 2009a). However, there are still some methodological issues to consider. Pavlenko (2008a) points out that research on bilingualism often fails to treat bilinguals as speakers of two languages because it focuses on the first language of bilinguals and does not consider the influence of their second language. Equally, De

Houwer (2014; 2015) points out that the way we assess very young bilinguals in their dominant language still shows a bias towards monolingualism. However, the language development of bilinguals has started to be studied in its own right. Some studies, for example, focus on what is distinctive about bilingualism such as bilinguals' use of language differences in patterns of pronunciation (Dewaele, 2010), or lexical processing and creativity in speaking and writing (Bialystok, 2001, Kharkhurin and Li Wei, 2014).

### **2.2.3. Modes of communication and code-switching**

In this section, I look at code-switching. In the literature, the two terms code-switching and code-mixing are often used interchangeably. However, for the sake of clarity, I only use the term code-switching in this study. Bilinguals have the unique ability of using two languages and borrowing from one of their languages (Grosjean, 2001) to enhance their communication in their other language. In the literature of bilingualism, code-switching is defined as the “alternation and mixing of different languages in the same episode of speech production” (Kharkhurin and Li Wei, 2014, p.153). Code-switching is now viewed as a sign of communicative multicompetence in languages (Bhatt and Bolonyai, 2011; Grosjean, 2001; Kharkhurin and Li Wei, 2014). However, code-switching is a form of bilingual competence which is often misunderstood by the general public who tend to assume that bilinguals would not mix languages if they were totally competent in two languages. Code-mixing is seen as the inability to differentiate between two languages. Bilingual children, who code-switch, are viewed as having failed to acquire their two languages properly (Baker and Jones, 1998; De Houwer, 2009b). Historically, children who mixed languages were even considered mentally confused and this is one of the reasons why parents were routinely advised to stop using two languages with their children (Baker and Jones, 1998; Sorace, 2006; De Houwer, 2009b). It was assumed that the brain of bilingual children could not cope with handling two languages. However, this has now been refuted. Young bilingual children are different from monolingual children because they acquire their vocabulary differently (De Houwer, 2009b; 2015; Bialystok, 2001). Incidentally, some researchers claim that bilinguals have a smaller vocabulary than monolinguals in each of their languages. Although their whole vocabulary is larger, it is divided across languages (De Houwer, 2015). Thus, bilinguals appear to know fewer words in each language (Barac et al., 2014; Bialystok and Craik, 2010). Bilingual children communicate differently from monolingual children because they can code-switch when they do not know a word in one of their languages as observed by Ronjat as early as 1913. For De Houwer (2009b; 2015), young children may also code-

switch because they prefer to use the word from one language than the other, possibly because they find one of the words easier to pronounce.

Navigating between their two languages is a normal stage of language development for bilingual children (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Li Wei, 2000; 2008; De Houwer, 2009a; 2009b). Bilingual children as young as two become aware of their bilingualism and are sensitive to the language choices of their interlocutors. For example, they can increase the proportion of words from one of their languages to match the language of their interlocutors (Genesee et al., 1995). Bilingual children thus adapt rapidly to the way languages are used in their environment including to the way their parents use and respond to code-switching (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). However, this is not automatically taken into account in studies of childhood language acquisition. Studies on childhood code-switching are often flawed because they do not allow for the fact that bilingual children are placed in bilingual contexts. In a test situation, for example, children often mix languages because it is what their caregivers are modelling (Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 2014; 2015).

Bilinguals can choose between two modes of communication. They can communicate through a monolingual mode or a bilingual mode (Grosjean, 2001). In a bilingual mode, their two languages are activated although one language is more activated than the other (Bialystok, 2001). Consequently, when they code-switch languages, bilinguals are actually using their bilingual mode of communication to their advantage (Grosjean, 2001). Code-switching is a powerful tool of communication that can be used as a communicative strategy to communicate with particular persons and in particular contexts (Dabène and Billiez, 1986; Romaine, 1995; Auer, 2014). When they communicate, bilingual children usually take into account other people's needs, beliefs and intentions (Kovacs et al., 2010). Bilingual children have been said to have greater emotional intelligence because they are good at resolving communication conflict by switching languages. For example, they may change languages if they realise that the person they are talking to does not know one of their languages (De Houwer, 2009b). Bilingual children can also use code-switching to express intimacy or on the contrary to take a distance from their interlocutors (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003). They may prefer to use one of their languages depending on whether their friends or parents are speaking that language (Dabène and Billiez, 1986). Additionally, bilinguals can use code-switching when they are in specific emotional states (Dewaele and Li Wei, 2014).

In the literature on language policy, code-switching is also linked to identity. Bilinguals may use code-switching to negotiate their identities by associating “each of

their languages with specific topics or situations and the identities and roles associated with them” (Spolsky, 1998). Thus, for the author (ibid. p.60):

The selection of a language by a bilingual, especially talking to another bilingual, carries a wealth of social meaning. Each language becomes a virtual guise for the bilingual speaker, who can change identity as easily as changing a hat, and can use language choice as a way of negotiating social relations with an interlocutor.

Accordingly, code-switching enables bilinguals to express their belonging or their exclusion from certain groups (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003). Older bilingual children can try “to negotiate, mediate and manage conflicts in values and identities in multilingual environments” (Hua Zhu and Li Wei, 2016). They may, for example, code-switch to challenge their parents’ authority. In SLA, code-switching can enable students to negotiate a new bilingual identity. It promotes the acquisition of the new language through a negotiation of meaning and focus on form. (Kramsch, 2007; 2009). Bhatia and Ritchie (2008b) who study bilingual creativity through adult code-switching in daily verbal exchanges claim that code-switching enables bilinguals to stretch the limits of both their languages and to produce a greater quantity of meanings.

#### **2.2.4. Cognitive functions**

In this section, I examine what the literature on cognition say about bilingualism and intelligence to debunk the myth of bilingualism according to which bilinguals are more intelligent than monolinguals because they know two languages (Sorace, 2006; Grosjean, 2010; 2015; Baker, 2011, De Houwer, 2009b). In chapter six, Marc, one of my participants, suggests that bilinguals may be perceived as more intelligent than monolinguals because they are using more than one language.

In the past, it was difficult to study the language acquisition of bilingual children because of a lack of knowledge about brain functions. Bilingualism was viewed as causing mental impairment in children. Today, research in bilingual language acquisition has greatly benefitted from the advances in neuroscience. Brain imaging has highlighted the existence of the executive control system in the brain (Bialystok 2001; 2015; Genesee, 2013). The executive control system is a mechanism found in the pre-frontal cortex, which helps bilinguals manage their two languages by controlling the flow of information they receive from them. It is involved in trying to keep the two languages separate by inhibiting or deactivating one of the languages while activating the other (Bialystok et al., 2005; 2010). The executive control system enables bilinguals to focus attention on the language that they require for communication (Bialystok 2001; 2015). Bilinguals have been found to have better abilities of concentration and attention. They can ignore, or

inhibit, misleading information earlier and faster than monolinguals (Bialystok 2001; 2015; Martin-Rhee and Bialystok, 2008; Barac et al., 2014). However, language processing may also be more effortful for bilinguals because of the co-activation of two languages, which may make it harder to recall words. However, bilingualism seems to be good for working memory. Bilinguals have an expanded memory and are faster at working memory tasks than monolinguals because they constantly hold multiple pieces of information in their brains. This might make bilingual better learners because a lot of learning depends on the capacity of the working memory (Blom et al., 2014).

The constant activity of the executive control system in bilinguals means that bilingual brains are constantly exercised and this appears to change their structures by increasing grey matter (Bialystok, 2008; 2015). Thus, bilingualism, although it does not make children more intelligent, may bring about academic benefits although other factors have to be considered. Kendall and Fogle (2006, p.2) state that:

Other factors, such as the child's level of mastery of each language and the child's literacy skills, also influence the benefits derived from being bilingual. Therefore, bilingualism may contribute to the strengthening of some specific cognitive skills for some children, but it should not be viewed as an overall indicator of greater intelligence or as a predictor of high academic performance.

Bilingual children have been found to perform better in cognitive tasks, which require attention (Bialystok, 2001; 2015; Bialystok et al., 2005; Martin-Rhee and Bialystok, 2008). They have also been found to be faster at learning to read, write and manage language rules at an earlier age than monolinguals (Kenner, 2004; Sorace, 2006; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2013). They may develop more analytical skills (Kovelman et al., 2008) and may acquire levels of abstraction at earlier ages than monolinguals (Bialystok, 2001; 2015).

Today, the understanding of childhood bilingualism also recognises the contribution of social and cultural factors that influence bilingual development (Grosjean, 1982) and differentiate between cases of language acquisition in a supportive or deprived environment (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003). Studies in the field include factors such as social background, educational opportunities or home language environment and take into account the different reasons why children become bilingual, which can be immigration, education, extended family or temporary residence.

### **2.3. Bilingual language acquisition**

In the interviews, my participants talked a lot about how they acquired their second languages mostly as adults, and how their children became bilingual. This is the reason

why I examine the literature on bilingual language development to try to understand what the participants said about their experiences of language acquisition in terms of stages and issues of language development. In this section, I also examine language transmission as the participants also talked in details about the strategies they chose to implement to transmit their languages.

### **2.3.1. Second language acquisition**

Most parents in the study talked about their own experiences of bilingualism and there was an interesting mixture of experiences as some of the parents had been bilingual children. However, most parents had learned a second language as adults. And I looked at the literature of second language learning (SLA) to understand their experiences. These experiences were quite important for the study because, in some cases, they seemed to have influenced what the parents thought of bilingualism and of their children's language acquisition. It is also tempting for parents of bilingual children to compare themselves to their children who are learning the language by immersion in schools although for Pavlenko (2008a, pp.9-10):

People who know more than one language may perform differently from monolingual speakers in their L1, exhibiting different metalinguistic judgements and patterns of pronunciation, a slower rate of lexical processing, and more sophistication and creativity in speaking and writing. The results also explain why many successful bi- and multilinguals judge themselves as not fully native-like in all of their languages – they are measuring their own performance against a monolingual yardstick.

For a long time, the fields of bilingualism and SLA have had a different focus. While bilingualism has focused on the use of languages, SLA has tended to focus more narrowly on the learning of languages in an educational context. Additionally, SLA has discarded the fact that SLA are already users of a first language and as such are destined to become bilinguals rather than monolinguals of the new languages they are learning. This makes Kramsch (2009; 2009; 2012) align with Firth and Wagner (1997) and question the finality of transforming second language learners into monolinguals of their second language.

An enduring myth of bilingualism is that children have an advantage over adults in learning a second language and this is the reason why children have been encouraged to learn languages early. Research on ultimate attainment of adult learners seems biased because for Piller (2002b, p.182):

[It] concentrates exclusively on two aspects of the L2 linguistic system: phonology and syntax. Other parts of the linguistic system such as lexis and the

conceptual system, and discourse and pragmatics are, by and large, ignored in ultimate attainment research.

Adult learners can be better at learning a language if and when they spend the same amount of time as children learning languages (Snow and Hoefnagel-Hoehle, 1978; Long, 1996; 2007; Bloom, 2000). This is because adult learners can use previous knowledge to learn a new language more quickly and efficiently. Adult learners already have a fully developed first language to draw upon. They can use their understanding of the rules and sentence structures of their first language to compare and use the rules of their new language while children cannot compare languages until they are older (Pinker, 1994). However, this does not mean that adult learners reach the level of grammar of native speakers because unlike young bilingual children, adult learners do experience fossilisation. For Selinker (1972), only about 5% of second language learners go on to develop the same mental grammar as native speakers.

Another noticeable difference between adult learners and young bilingual children is that adult learners usually have a foreign accent when they speak in a second language. The ability to physically reproduce the sounds of languages declines very early (Tomatis, 1991; Pinker, 1994; Piller, 2002b; 2013). For applied linguists, having an accent does not make one more or less bilingual (Grosjean, 2010). It is considered the least important aspect of proficiency compared to the size and accuracy of vocabulary (Piller, 2013). However, for Piller (*ibid.*), accents are indeed a worry for second language speakers because it is what they feel judged on. In the study, some of my participants commented on their accents as a sign that they were not bilingual or could not pass for native-speakers. However, accents can be very subjective. Building on previous research, Piller shows that the visual information a person gets from seeing a person speak a language change the way they hear that language. Thus, if a person is listening to someone who looks foreign, he/she may hear that person as having a foreign accent although it may not be the case. Not all second language learners worry about their accents, though. Some learners do not mind having a foreign accent because they want to retain their original identity when they speak another language (Piller, 2013; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2013).

For Kramsch (2009; 2012), learning another language is part of personal growth and improvement and SLA learners have a desire for language that goes beyond the mere cognitive learning of a second language. It is:

an eminently embodied kind of learning, which engages a learner's mind, emotions, memories and imaginings, identifications, and their deepest fears and aspirations. (Kramsch, 2007)



Some SLA learners may aspire to pass for native-speakers as a measurement of their high achievement in acquiring a second language (Piller, 2001; 2013). However, the process of learning a second language is continual (Kramsch, 2009; 2012) although, for Piller, it is not appropriate to treat learners as “perpetual learners” because first language learners are never treated as perpetual learners (Piller, 2002b, p.180).

### **2.3.2. Childhood bilingual language development**

In this section, I examine what the literature on language development says about childhood language acquisition. Early researchers in cognitive development claimed that any children, whether monolingual or bilingual, acquire their first language(s) as part of their natural cognitive development, from observation and social interaction (Piaget, 1998). They then progress to a higher level of knowledge and performance with the help of supportive interactions (Vygotsky and Souberman, 1978; Vygotsky, 1991). On the other hand, innatist researchers claim that children are biologically programmed to acquire languages because their brains are equipped with a unique “language acquisition device” which contains a “universal grammar” and provides children with a set of grammatical principles common to all languages. This universal grammar enables children to use language creatively (Chomsky, 1986; Pinker, 1994; 1995).

The difference between the language development of monolingual children and bilingual children is that bilingual children need to acquire two languages. These two languages can be acquired simultaneously which means that the children acquire their two languages at the same time, in their first year, and under natural conditions in a bilingual environment (De Houwer, 1990; 2006; 2009a; 2009b). These two languages are treated as two first languages (Foster-Cohen 1999). Thus, for Pettito and Dunbar (2009, p.188):

If bilingual children experience early, extensive, and systematic exposure to two languages, they quickly grasp the fundamentals of both of their languages and in a manner, virtually identical to that of monolingual language learners.

However, bilingual children can also acquire their two languages sequentially that is at different times. In sequential bilingualism, children only become proficient in a second language once they have already acquired a first language usually around the age of three (Baker 2011; De Houwer, 1995; 2009b).

Until the age of two, simultaneous bilingual children are busy acquiring the vocabulary of their two languages. They mix the words from their two languages because they are not yet able to attribute a meaning to each word (Bloom, 2000; Harding-Esch

and Riley 2003). They may also form new compound words with words of their two languages (De Houwer 2009a; 2015). From three to four, simultaneous bilingual children can form pairs of words in their two languages and label languages although they may prefer to use certain words of either language because they are easier to pronounce. At first, bilingual children who seem to acquire grammatical structures in the same way as monolingual children (Bialystok, 2001) and do not mix their grammars (Genesee et al., 1995; Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003), use the same basic grammatical rules in both languages. After the age of four, bilingual children have normally acquired the basic structures of their two languages (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003). They can differentiate the vocabulary of their two languages and separate words from their meanings. They can use the grammar rules of both languages. They acquire more metalinguistic awareness and the social conventions of the two languages (Soifer, 2012). They become cognizant of “translation concept” (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2007, p.109) and know which language to use to whom and for which different purposes. Whatever the age of acquisition, all bilingual children seem to follow the same pattern of bilingual language acquisition although there seems to be a sensitive period for the native-like acquisition of a second language. Research into the organisation of cognitive processes in bilingual brains shows that after the age of five, the native-like organisation for language may no longer be possible (De Houwer, 2005). However, bilingual children are still able to become extremely proficient in their two languages.

Finally, in an educational context, there seems to be a consensus that it takes about two years to attain basic conversational fluency in a language and that it takes between 5 and 7 years to attain academic language proficiency (Ligthbown and Spada, 2006, Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2013). This is relevant to my study because some of my participants migrate to other countries and had experiences of learning their second language in nursery school.

### **2.3.2.1. Strategies to encourage children’s bilingual language acquisition**

In this section, I focus on three of the strategies to encourage children’s bilingual language acquisition that are relevant to this study. They are part of the typology formalised by Romaine (1995) which is still much in use today (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003).

These strategies are based on family language use. The most popular strategy to encourage children’s active bilingualism seems to be the “one person, one language” approach (OPOL) which is much promoted in parental guidebooks (Harding-Esch and

Riley, 2003; Baker, 2014; De Houwer, 2009a; 2009b). However, in practice, this approach is not used the most because it is very demanding (De Houwer, 2013; 2015). In the OPOL approach, one parent sticks to speaking one language only to the children. This is meant to guarantee maximum exposure in the two languages from birth and ensure that children acquire both of their languages as two native languages. This approach is often perceived as a rather elitist strategy because it is often the first choice of methods by parents from higher socio-economic groups who are themselves bilingual and speak the language of the community (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). However, the OPOL approach does not guarantee bilingual language acquisition because it is difficult to become highly competent in a language that is not spoken by the community (Romaine, 1995). The children of the parents who use the OPOL approach often attend local schools and are well integrated into their communities. They have peers who speak the dominant language (Lanza and Svendsen, 2007). Thus, the parents who adopt the OPOL approach have to make extra efforts to support the acquisition and maintenance of the heritage language (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004).

Parents often have to adapt the OPOL approach to suit the family's circumstances (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). They often end up using a "mixed language strategy" and thus use more than one language in their interactions (Lanza, 2007) to include dominant language speakers. This strategy appears to be one of the most frequent strategies adopted by bilingual parents (De Houwer, 2009b). Parents may mix languages or code-switch. Alternatively, one parent, in particular, may use both languages with the children. In the third strategy, the "Non-dominant Home Language" / "One Language – One Environment" strategy the parents have different native languages and one of these languages is the dominant language of the community (Romaine, 1995, p.184). However, both parents decide to speak the heritage language to the child who is exposed to the dominant language outside the home, and in particular in school.

Strategies to encourage childhood bilingualism are very dependent on the life circumstances of the parents and family language planning may not necessarily lead to children's acquiring two languages because of the way language practices are constantly negotiated in bilingual families (Pavlenko, 2004; 2008a, Piller, 2015). The status of the language shared by the parents affects the outcome of the children's bilingual development (Piller, 2002a). If the parents communicate in the dominant language, the children are less likely to develop active bilingualism (De Houwer, 2007). They may become "receptive" or "passive" bilinguals (De Houwer, 2009b) and only speak the language of the community in which the family lives although they understand the two languages spoken by their parents.

### **2.3.2.2. Provision of language input**

To become bilingual, children must be exposed to the languages they need to learn and get a consistent input in these languages (De Houwer, 2005; 2007; 2009a; 2009b; 2014; 2015). This input should be diverse and age appropriate (De Houwer, 1999b). The quantity of input that very young bilingual children receive is primordial because, at a very young age, children cannot compensate for a lack of language they are not hearing at home (De Houwer, 2015). However, the quantity of input necessary for language development, in the early stages of children's language acquisition, is controversial. Low input ( $\leq 20\%$ ) in very early childhood may lead to very limited productive skills (Pearson et al., 1997) although some children may learn some language, mostly vocabulary (Gatt et al., 2015). Nevertheless, parents often misjudge the quantity of input they provide (De Houwer, 2015).

However, the quality of input that a child receives may be more important than the quantity and the age of exposure (Quay, 2015). Quay (2015) looks at the input received by a pre-schooler living in Canada who received a limited input in Mandarin from his grandfather and finds that the child acquired Mandarin because of his close relationship with his grandfather. Quay's study highlights the importance of interactions for language learning in line with findings from Kuhl et al. (2003) and Kuhl (2007). Thus, interruption of input, as sometimes recommended by speech therapists, can have a detrimental effect on the whole family (De Houwer, 2009b).

## **2.4. Language ideologies**

Bilingualism and language acquisition have also been conceptualised in research on language ideologies which are important for this study because language ideologies have an impact on parents' language policies and language management (Spolsky, 2009). Recently, research on language ideologies have focused on the nature, structure and use of language and have linked language to group and personal identity. Therefore, language ideologies have been found to be a "link between linguistic and social forms and structures" (Piller, 2015, p.1). In addition, research on language ideologies can illuminate issues of inequality among groups of speakers (Bourdieu, 1992; Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994).

### **2.4.1. Definitions of language ideologies**

Defining language ideologies is difficult because language ideologies are considered to represent beliefs or feelings about languages which are often based on “shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world” (Rumsey, 1990, cited in Woolard, 1992, p.235). They also include “cultural conceptions of the nature and purpose of communication, and of communicative behaviour as an enactment of a collective order” (Silverstein 1987, cited in Woolard, 1992, p.235). Language ideologies can thus be powerful socially. Linguistic anthropologist, Silverstein (1979) shows that the adoption of certain language structures such as the egalitarian “Tu” in French, or “Du” in German, which echo changes in beliefs on social life lead to more egalitarianism in communities.

### **2.4.2. Language ideologies have strong social purposes**

For Woolard (1992), language ideologies are dynamic processes, which influence social, discursive, and linguistic practices. They represent an intellectual bridge between research on language structure and language politics, and between linguistic and social theory. Woolard (Ibid. p.236) points out that:

The topic of language ideology is a much-needed bridge between linguistic and social theory, because it relates the microculture of communicative action to political and economic considerations of power and social inequality, confronting macrosocial constraints on language behavior.

For the author (1992), the purpose of language ideologies is essentially social and therefore “language ideologies are interested, multiple, and contested” (ibid. p.239). Nevertheless, language ideologies tend to represent the interest of the dominant social groups. For example, the language ideology of “standard language” values and imposes a standard version of language which is deemed to be superior to other ways of speaking. This standard version is normally acquired through formal education and it is often based on the written language. Thus, the standard language tends to become universally recognised and desired although it tends to exclude speakers who cannot speak it and thus reinforce inequality (Bourdieu, 1992; 2001). Individuals who cannot speak the standard language may even be judged as lacking in intelligence or being either lazy or having a negative attitude (Piller, 2015). For a sociologist like Bourdieu (1992), “speakers lacking the legitimate competence are de facto excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required, or are condemned to silence” (ibid, p.55). Therefore, languages

are far from neutral (Piller, 2002a, Pavlenko, 2003; Fell, 2012). The languages that individuals speak bring up issues of power, status, and prestige (Baker, 2001).

Furthermore, children respond to the way their languages are valued socio-economically from an early age, (Hamers and Blanc, 1989; Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003). The socio-economic status of the families impacts on childhood bilingual development (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003; Gathercole, 2014). Bilingual families with high socio-economic status, in which two languages are spoken, seem to place more value on developing their children's bilingualism. In these families, the parents who tend to come from stable, middle-class or elite backgrounds are often "in a position to support the educative process of their children with back-up involvement" (Baetens Beardsmore, 2003, p.17). Inversely, families with lesser socio-economic status may favour language integration into the dominant language (Gathercole, 2014).

### **2.4.3. Elite and folk bilingualism**

Socio-economical values can give rise to two forms of bilingualism, "elite" bilingualism and "folk" bilingualism. "Elite" bilingualism, which is often additive, is associated with prestige (De Mejia, 2002; Pavlenko, 2001a; King and Fogle, 2006a; Guerrero, 2010) and tends to be prevalent among privileged classes (De Mejia, 2002). For King and Fogle (2006a, pp.695-696):

This sort of additive bilingualism has traditionally been viewed as the purview of upper class "elites". Indeed, "additive bilingualism" (Lambert, 1945) and "elite bilingualism" (Fishman et al., 1966) are sometimes used as synonyms (e.g. McCarty, 1995) to refer to contexts where families choose to maintain and develop two or more languages.

Thus, elite bilingualism tends to concern bilinguals, who are usually well-educated members of societies and choose to speak a second language. They often speak European languages that they may not need in their everyday lives like Spanish in the United States. For Guerrero (2010, p.173):

One of the characteristics of elite bilingualism is that it is voluntary; people are free to make the choice of learning an L2; they learn an additional language for personal or professional purposes, not to survive or because circumstances lead them to, as happens in folk bilingualism.

"Folk" bilingualism seems to prevail among the minorities resulting from "the circumstances in which ethnic communities live and whose bilingualism is involuntary and necessary for survival" (Tosi 1982, cited in Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003, p.23).

However, there is also a trend for language-minority parents to be keen to maintain their heritage language and seek educational opportunities to do so (King and Fogle, 2006a).

Nevertheless, in both elite and folk bilingualism, the motivation of the parents goes beyond the educational, social and economic advantages of bilingualism and extend to maintaining contact with monolingual family members as bilingual children also need to be able to communicate with their families abroad (De Houwer, 2009b) as shown in my study.

#### **2.4.4. The language ideology of globalisation**

However, in our new age of globalisation and neo-liberalism, there is a new language ideology that may play against bilingualism. This ideology dictates that there may be a need for a “global language” and that this global language is English. As such, English is believed to be superior to the national languages because it is generally seen as more useful for education and business purposes (Piller and Cho, 2013). At the same time, it is also felt that speaking English with an accent other than the British or American accents is not desirable (Piller, 2015).

On the other hand, in English-speaking countries in which national and local policies rarely support bilingualism and bilingual education, the ideology of English as a global language may hinder the development of other languages and result in bilingual children becoming passive bilinguals (Spolsky, 2004) because bilingual children are very aware of the value of English and tend to use that language with their siblings and peers rather than the heritage languages (Shin, 2005).

Additionally, the ideology of English as a global language may clash with the enduring ideology of “one nation, one language” which dictates that monolingualism is necessary for social harmony and national unity. Like the standard language ideology, the ideology of “one nation, one language” has the potential to exclude those who do not speak the dominant language (Kristeva, 1988; Piller, 2015). Thus, for Blommaert (2005), the “relationship between linguistic ideologies and other socio-political, or cultural ideologies” (ibid. p.171) should be carefully studied because it raises the “question of how linguistic ideologies can and do become instruments of power as part of larger ideological complexes”.

#### **2.4.5. Parents’ language ideologies**

At a micro level, my thesis is concerned with the language ideologies of bilingual individuals and interactions within the families, a context which traditionally has been less researched than public or institutional contexts. For King et al. (2008), “dominant

ideologies intersect and compete with local and individual views on language and parenting” (ibid. p.914). However, parents in bilingual families have to make decisions that are similar to national language policies. They need to decide whether to use the heritage language (“status planning”), which variety of language to use (“corpus planning”) and how and when to formally or informally transmit the language (“acquisition planning”) and address the following questions:

which caretakers attempt to influence what behaviors of which family members for what ends under what conditions by what means through what decision-making process with what effect? (King et al., 2008, p.910).

Studies of first language socialization demonstrate how language ideologies are represented in language practices and show the links between the parents’ cultural beliefs and the communicative strategies they use. For De Houwer (1999), bilingual parents’ beliefs and attitudes influence parental linguistic choices and interaction strategies which in turn influence the language development of the children. However, the processes are not unidirectional but interactive. Parents also choose the strategies they are going to implement like the OPOL approach based on their beliefs on how responsible they feel for shaping their children’s languages and on their capacities to implement such strategies (King et al., 2008, p.912).

Additionally, as seen previously in section 2.2, parents of bilingual children may have mythical beliefs about bilingualism that are not supported by theoretical evidence (Grosjean, 2010; Genesee, 2013). They may believe in some of the previously discussed common myths of bilingualism about bilingual language acquisition. This can have serious implications for the children’s language acquisition and socialization. For example, the belief that children are linguistic sponges who acquire languages easily may raise parents’ expectations and stop them from planning their children’s language acquisition strategically in order to provide their children with an optimal learning environment (De Houwer, 2015).

Lastly, language ideologies, both societal and parental, are important because they impact on children’s cognitive development and their school success while collectively they determine the maintenance of heritage languages (King and Fogle, 2013). Language ideologies inform language policies and practices which are discussed in section 3.4.

## **2. 5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined the literature of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics on second language acquisition, childhood bilingualism and language ideologies and



brought some ideas together, to help me understand how my participants may perceive, value and understand their bilingualism and what linguistic challenges and issues they may face when developing bilingual families.

I first looked at the definitions of bilingualism and retained Li Wei and Moyer's (2008) definition of a bilingual person as "possessing two languages" because it is a definition that does not narrow solely on competence but allows for a wider interpretation. This definition seems appropriate in this study because my participants talked about varying levels of proficiency in describing their bilingualism. Then I showed how the terminology of the definitions of bilingualism seems to have reinforced persistent myths of bilingualism. One of the stronger myths about bilingualism, central to my study, is the ideal of perfect language competence in both languages that seems to stem from early definitions of bilingualism that were debunked by Grosjean's theory of "complementary principle" of bilingualism (1982). According to this principle, bilinguals do not need to be equally competent in both their languages because they acquire and use their language for different purposes and in different domains of life with different people. Nowadays, researchers of bilingualism tend to view bilinguals as unique users of two languages who have distinct particularities such as the ability to mix languages or code-switch to enhance communication (Li Wei, 2008) and negotiate their identities (Spolsky, 1998).

Looking at code-switching led me to examine the literature on cognition and how languages are processed differently in a bilingual brain. Bilingual cognitive functions are noticeably enhanced by the constant activity of their executive control system (Bialystok, 2015). I looked at the way adult and children bilinguals acquire their languages and how the literature on language acquisition and second language acquisition differentiate between children and adult, the latter often being treated as learners rather than actual users of their second language (Kramsch, 2012) which might affect the way bilingual adults perceive themselves as bilinguals. The motivations of second language learners to acquire languages are also very complex and touch on issues of cultural identity (Kramsch, 2009).

Adult and children acquire language differently. Unlike children, adults can use their previous knowledge of language (Pinker, 1994; Bloom, 2000). However, adults tend to experience two phenomena that might make it difficult for them to use one or the other of their languages. Adult bilinguals who do not practise a first language enough may experience language attrition or loss of language (Grosjean, 2004). They may also experience fossilization (Han, 2003) and thus reach a plateau in their second language acquisition that may prevent them from attaining native-like competence, notably phonologically (Piller, 2012). On the other hand, children who acquire a second language

can become extremely proficient in their two languages (De Houwer, 2013). However, they are very dependent on the strategies that their parents implement to encourage them to become active bilingual (Romaine, 1995) because the provision and quality of language input are very important for children bilingual language acquisition (De Houwer, 2015). The beliefs that parents have about language and use of language play a great part in the acquisition and transmission of heritage languages. These beliefs influence social, discursive, and linguistic practices (Woolard, 1992).

The key concepts about bilingualism, bilingual language acquisition and language ideologies presented in this chapter help illuminate what my participants say about their language beliefs and how they perceive understand and value their individual and familial bilingualism (chapter six and seven). These concepts also help illuminate the specific strategies chosen by my participants to develop familial bilingualism, and in particular what they say about language input (chapter seven). These concepts also illuminate some of the language issues faced by the participants like attrition and fossilisation (chapter eight).

In the next chapter, I examine issues of bilingual cultural identity because it seems that beyond linguistic issues, some of the challenges and issues that my participants encountered in developing bilingual families had to do with bilingual cultural identities.

## **Chapter three**

### **Conceptualisation of bilingual identities, transmission of cultural identities and the role of family language planning**

Through language choice, we maintain and change ethnic group boundaries and personal relationships, and construct and define “self” and “other” within a broader political economy and historical context. So, the issue of language use that linguists and psycholinguists are concerned with becomes an issue of identity and identification for the sociolinguist. (Li Wei, 2008, p.13)

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I focus on some of the themes about cultural identity that arose from the data and that I investigate in the literature of applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and sociology, in the fields of second language acquisition and family language policies to understand how bilingual cultural identities are formed through language and what role family language policies approaches play in the formation of such identities.

Initially, I was interested in understanding whether my participants experienced any issues and challenged in transmitting their cultural identities to their children but became intrigued by what my participants said about their own bilingual identities, which appear to be rather complex. My participants talked about multiple identities, including national and cultural identities, social identities and parental identities. They also talked about their children’s identity as bilingual children. One of the salient themes of my data seemed to be the need to belong to the communities the participants were living in.

#### **3.2. Conceptualisation of bilingual identities**

##### **3.2.1. Bilingual identities are formed through language**

There seems to be a consensus in applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and sociology that individuals acquire their identities through their interchange or communication with others (Pinker, 1994; Norton, 2000; 2006; 2013). For example, identities are said to be the product of discourses and relationships (Abdallah-Preteuille, 1986; 2006).

In the literature on socio-cultural identity and second language acquisition, there is much discussion on the formation of identities as well as the terminology that should be

used to characterise such formation. Social-constructivists argue that identities are dynamic and fluid and represent the way individuals believe others view them (Holliday et al., 2004) contrary to essentialists who define individuals collectively by emphasising their differences or otherness in terms of essential or core cultural categories. Thus, socio-constructivists believe that individuals construct their own identities engaging in a process of “constructed selves” (Schrauf, 2000, p.387) although there is some debate about the use of the term “construction” that appear too solid for our new globalised world (Kramersch, 2012). Dervin (2013) prefers to use a terminology of fluidity borrowed from Bauman (2000) to convey the idea that in a globalised world identities in which individuals have to “deal with their own and other’s diversities on a permanent basis” (Dervin, 2013), identities are more like liquid than solid. And thus, for Dervin (2012), the origins of a bilingual individual who has several national identities cannot be singled out or it would lead to an “intercultural imposture”. For the author (2011; 2012), individuals have complex social, religious and emotional origins and should feel free to choose anyone of their identities depending on their interlocutors. In this sense, identities are like personal projects (Holliday, 2013) or productions which can never be completed because they are constantly evolving (Hall, 1991). They are said to be “in process” (Kristeva and Moi, 1986) in the sense that individuals are permanently engaged in creating their identities through language (Pavlenko 2008a; Kramersch, 2007; 2009). Kramersch (2006, p.99), for example, says that:

As a sign system, language elicits subjective responses in the learners themselves: emotions, memories, fantasies, projections, identifications. Because it is not only a code but also a meaning-making system language constructs the historical sedimentation of meanings that we call our “selves”.

Language enables individuals to distinguish between self and others and share cultural meaning (Jardine, Kristeva and Gora, 1980). For Joseph (2004, p.188), language and identity cannot be separated because they are “completely bound up with each other on every level, both personal, national, and beyond”. Also, language identities give individuals a sense of belonging because language serves as representation (Joseph, 2004; 2006). Language identities thus enable individuals to categorise who they “believe people really are according to how they speak” (Joseph, 2004, p.188). However, the sense of belonging to such language identities may lead individuals to construct an ideology of “us” against “them” that is essentialist in nature. While I support the ideal socio-constructivist views of fluid bilingual identities (Dervin, 2013), I also find Joseph’s (2004; 2006) views on linguistic identity useful in the context of my study as they illuminate the complex and contrary nature of bilingual identities and the attachment to

heritage languages. Language, for example, can be very important to maintain the sense of identity of some groups. Some nations, like France, strongly base their identity on language (Edwards, 2003). In France, for example, this has led to a powerful merger between the national and the linguistic identities (Kristeva, 2014). France is very protective of the French language through institutions such as the Francophonie or l'Académie Française. It dedicates an important part of the school curriculum to the acquisition of the language. Recently, a spelling reform was much debated in France. The opponents of the reform argued that the simplification of the spelling would lead to an impoverishment of the language that would affect the ability of the next generations to philosophise, which is a pursuit that is much valued in France. Equally, in her research on language maintenance and transmission of Catalan and Galician families living in New York, Juarros-Daussà (2013) shows how the feeling of being Catalan is, in many cases, linked to speaking Catalan. However, apart from language, groups of individuals can also construct their identities by comparing their gender, ethnicity (Tajfel, 1979; Hutchinson and Smith, 1996) and social class (Block, 2013) to those of other groups and sometimes one of these aspects can be more or less salient from group to group.

Through language, bilinguals can modify their existing identities or create new ones (Davies and Harré, 1990). When they choose a language, bilinguals position themselves in the communities in which they live and this language enables them to reflect and act on this positioning (ibid.). Language enables individuals to “evoke, assert, define, modify, challenge, and/or support their own and others’ desired self-images” (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p 40). Kramersch (2006; 2009; 2012c) claims that language learners have a desire for language because the new language and culture might enable them to construct new selves and in Kramersch’s words (2006, p.101) “to escape from a state of tedious conformity with one’s present environment to a state of plenitude and enhanced power” (ibid. p.101). The author (2009) documents the very intense subjective (and physical) experiences of SLA students who experience speaking new languages as liberating as languages seem to enable them to reinvent themselves. Thus, for the author,

in its referential and mythic dimensions, language performs and creates subjectivities that these multilingual speakers use to conjure up alternative worlds and virtual selves, both in real life and on the internet. (Kramersch, 2006, p.97)

This desire for languages and new identities echoes the desire for language described by Jardine, Kristeva and Gora (1980) and Kristeva (1988) as a basic drive toward self-fulfilment. For Kristeva (1988), this desire to acquire a new linguistic identity stems from a need to identify with others. For Kramersch (2006), there is a need to study

this desire in SLA research because SLA has tended to focus too narrowly on language acquisition. However, while language is “a tool for the achievement of pragmatic goals or for social acceptance by a group”, there is a strong “need for identification with others, with their language, their ways of speaking” as this is what makes us human (Kramsch, 2006, p.101).

On the other hand, Pavlenko (2001a; 2003; 2008a) warns that in monolingual societies, multilinguals who are proficient in their second language but do not speak like native speakers may still feel illegitimate when they speak the dominant language because they do not have the right language identity. Kramsch (2009; 2012) also develops a theory of legitimacy and authenticity of SLA learners showing that becoming fluent in a second language does not guarantee that bilinguals feel secure in their new linguistic identities or integrated into their new communities. Using examples drawn from language narratives, Kramsch (2009; 2012c) points out that Hoffman (1989), a Polish immigrant in the United States, seems to question her legitimacy as an English speaker when she uses American English because she might not feel American enough although she appears to be perfectly fluent in English. Kramsch (ibid.) also remarks that Stavans (2001), another author of a language memoir, who is a legitimate speaker of Spanish, Yiddish, Hebrew and English and has lived in several countries speaking those languages might feel unauthentic because his roots are not clearly marked, or authenticated. Today, individuals live in a globalised world in which they can travel and migrate much more easily than they used to do. National identities, which used to be firmly based on citizenship and the possession of a passport, are being challenged by unrelenting global and political changes. Members of the European Union, for example, like some of the participants in my study, may question their national identities and whether they are British, French, Spanish and/or European. They may further question whether they really need to identify with the national identifications given to them by their nation states such as “white British” in the United Kingdom or “second generation immigrant” in France.

### **3.2.2. Bilingual identities are multiple and fragmented**

In recent years, much discussion, in sociolinguistics, has centred on the multiplicity and changeable nature of identities (Norton, 2000; Riley, 2007; Miller, 2009; Lantolf, 2000, Pavlenko, 2001a; 2011). Schrauf (2000) suggests that individuals, who acquire and communicate their self-representations through language, have multiple self-representations. This is supported by Oetzel (2009), who uses the metaphor of “constellation of identities”. These identities, whether objective, subjective, personal, collective, social or cultural, can be hybrid and intertwined. They are also said to be

“fragmented” (Abdallah-Preteille, 2006). For Abdallah-Preteille (2006), identities are made up of parts of specialized identities such as for example “social identities” (Riley, 2007), “cultural identity” (Holliday, 2010), “bicultural identity” (Arnett, 2002), “ethnic identity” (Phinney and Ong, 2007), “learner identity” (Norton, 2000), “teacher identity” (Miller, 2009), “parent identity (Katz-Wise et al., 2010) to cite the few identities that were salient in my data.

In addition, fragmentation may suggest that some identities can be fragile. They can also clash and be a source of conflict (Jameson, 2007), for example, when parents try to juggle their identities as parents with their identities as teachers of their own children, which was the case for some the participants in the study. At times, one of the identities may become more salient in the lives of individuals. This is the case when individual becomes parents, the transition to parenthood being one of the most notable developments in adults (Katz-Wise et al., 2010). My participants clearly distinguish the periods of their life before and after they became parents. However, parenthood may affect individuals differently and be experienced differently depending on gender. Women are said to experience motherhood as something they “are” as opposed to men who may experience it as something they “do” (Katz-Wise et al., 2010, p 19). In addition, parenthood identity, and in particular motherhood identity, are cultural identities that are difficult to control because they are historically situated (Woodward, 1997). They are “subject to social, economic and cultural practices” (ibid. p.240). For Holliday (2010), motherhood is difficult to position in a cultural context because it is positioned:

between inherited cultural identities (i.e. traditional, imposed and presumed) and creative cultural identities (established as a result of cultural change, the turning, invading, and manipulation of resources, and the playing of territory) (ibid. 2010, p.19).

Incidentally, in the study, parenthood could be viewed as a “small culture” defined in applied linguistics and SLA as:

a dynamic, ongoing group process which operates in changing circumstances to enable group members to make sense of and operate meaningfully within those circumstances” (Holliday, 1999, p.248)

Or, in the context of my research, as a cultural cohesive social grouping with its own activities and practices that enables parents to create their own bilingual families within a local “small culture” of bilingual families (Holliday, 2013). As such, the conceptualisation of “small culture” could become an “interpretative device for understanding emerging behaviour (Holliday, 1999, p.237) transforming culture into “the

location for research” in opposition to the perspective of a “larger culture” identifying groups of individuals based on “ethnic”, “national” or “international” affiliations (ibid. p.237).

### **3.2.3. Bilingual identities are negotiated socially**

Bilingual individuals are by nature “social actors” (Li Wei, 2008, p.13) who perform their identities through discourse in one or more languages (Tabouret-Keller, 1997; Brock Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Goffman (1959, cited in Woodward 2004, p.13) already evoked the idea of performance when he said “identities are social markers, which are enacted or ‘performed’ – either subconsciously or consciously – to specific audiences”. This notion of enactment is built on by Gee who claims that bilinguals may need to “enact and recognise different identities or social positions in different settings” (Gee 1999, cited in Holliday et al., 2004, p.77). Therefore, bilingual parents can choose to either perform their role of parents monoculturally or biculturally (Hamers and Blanc, 1989).

Canagarajah (2004, p.117) claims that individuals are motivated to learn another language because they want to join specific communities to engage in communication and social life. However, the rise of multiculturalism and globalisation is now making the nature of social and group membership increasingly complex. Through languages, bilinguals negotiate their identities and can become members of specific groups in specific contexts (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2001, 2004; Cameron, 2012). Bilinguals, who have multiple representations of the self, belong to multiple groups or “community of practice”, that is to “social groups made up of individuals who come together to share a common activity” (Davenport and Hall, 2001, p.94). Moreover, their identities may conflict with the public identity others perceive. The public perceives bilingualism differently depending on the communities the bilinguals belong to at certain times. This perception may also vary over time (Riley, 2007).

However, for Norton (2000; 2013) bilinguals use negotiations not only to produce but also to reproduce identities. Migrants have to position themselves in a society based on social and economic status. Notions of social classes have changed drastically in 21st century Britain. Social classes were last redefined in 2013 following a large-scale BBC survey, which was inspired by Bourdieu’s theory of social and cultural capital (1984; 1992). The survey studied people’s cultural and social lives such as the extent and nature of their cultural interests and activities including travelling abroad, alongside their traditional economic standing. For Bourdieu (2001), whose work is situated within post-structuralist perspectives, to understand how individuals function socially, it is important



to understand the kind of symbolic capital they possess and the kind of power relations they are involved in. Symbolic capital is composed of social capital, which are resources such as group membership, relationships, networks of influences and support. Cultural capital is composed of forms of knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that individuals possess and which give them a higher status in society. Habitus is composed of social class, education, upbringing and past choices that predetermine the behaviour of individual and their potential courses of action. Parents usually provide Bourdieu's symbolic capital to help their children succeed in life. In this study, Bourdieu's notions of symbolic capital and habitus can be useful to explain how parents invest in their children's bilingualism. My participants seemed to talk a lot about negotiations of identities and symbolic power in their interactions with others (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004; Norton 2000; 2013; Block 2003; 2007; 2013). Some of the participants in the study moved abroad to study and work. They acquired language skills that improved their own cultural capital and were keen to equip their children with a foreign language to improve their future professional lives. Language also enabled my participants to make the most of their new life circumstances. For Bourdieu (2001), language should be viewed both as a means of communication and as a medium of power through which individuals pursue their own interests and display their practical competence. For the author (ibid, p.62):

We never learn language without learning at the same time the conditions of acceptability of this language. In other words, learning a language means learning at the same time that this language will be profitable in this or that situation”

Class reproduction is inevitable and therefore makes itself legitimate (Bourdieu, 2001). Also, for Bourdieu, the more cultural capital a person has in society, the more distance they are going to create between themselves and everyone else. For example, they may choose to educate their children in private schools. For Bentahila (1983), socioeconomic status is an important factor of biculturalism. For the author, the more cosmopolitan and upper to middle class a bilingual is, the easier it is for him to be bicultural.

The participants in my study appear to be middle class although they may not necessarily have been born. However, defining social classes in applied linguistics and in bilingualism proves rather difficult because until very recently, most researchers have been reluctant to use social class as a variable. Therefore, in language education research, social class remains largely underexplored, compared to identity categories of ethnicity, race, and gender (Block, 2013). However, for Block (2014), who echoes Pennycook (2010), there is a need to include social class in applied linguistics and in research in

sociolinguistics, multilingualism, and second language acquisition and learning, and engage with questions of social inequality in order to enrich research. In *Social class in applied linguistics*, Block (2013) argues that class needs to be understood in terms of “lived experience” (p.58), or in other words as a cultural as well as social category. This echoes the more contemporary understanding of class used in the last UK census, which also takes into account Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital that is passed on within families. This is how class is understood in my study and the traditional label of middle-class is used to define the class that benefits from social and cultural capital, and can afford to send their children to private school, for example.

Relations of power affect the social interaction between second language learners and native language speakers (Norton Pierce, 1995). They may also affect the extent to which a bilingual belongs to one community or the other. Norton (2000) studied a group of underprivileged immigrant mothers in Canada. The author talks of her participants as investing in SLA to build a better future for themselves and their families. She gives examples of how her participants negotiated and created their bilingual identities through language. Thus, language acquisition enables Norton’s participants to gradually reframe their relationships and claim positions as legitimate speakers in society. Piller (2002a) also uses the term investment to state how parents view bilingualism as an investment in their children’s economic and cultural future. Learning English enables Piller’s participants to gain more symbolic and material resources, and thus more cultural capital to negotiate their identities in society. Although both Norton and Piller adopt a post-structuralist perspective to identity and attend to the role of power and inequality, they are also interested in the psychology of how the individuals fit in their new social worlds. Both authors look at factors such as personality, gender, ethnicity and status (Piller, 2000). For Norton, identity represents how individuals understand their "relationship to the world, how this relationship is constructed in time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2000, p.5).

#### **3.2.4. Loss of language may lead to acculturation**

Bilinguals may adopt different strategies to relate to their new cultural environments. Bilinguals may embrace and adopt the culture of their new environment and be tempted to abandon or modify their first cultures (Pavlenko, 1997; Kramsch, 2009). This may lead to a gradual process of convergence with the new culture or acculturation. Acculturation normally starts with the acquisition of the new language and extends to participation in the new culture (Birman and Trickett, 2001). Acculturation challenges the conceptual representations of the first cultural context. It involves many

changes in the lives of the bilinguals including language competence and use, cultural identity, attitudes and values, food and music preferences, media use, ethnic pride, ethnic social relations, cultural familiarity, and social customs (Fell, 2012). Thus, bilinguals may mix elements of the new culture with their own original culture. Bilinguals may reject the new culture and maintain their original culture (Tajfel, 1979). According to Javier et al. (1993, p.9):

Older conceptions may co-exist with new conceptual representations, they may shift in scope and amplitude in the direction of new cultural dimensions, or they may converge towards wholly new representations different from both the first and second language/cultures.

Parents and children acculturate in different ways and at different paces because they live different social and cultural lives (Berry, 2006). Children, who migrate with their parents to a new country, are supposedly able to adapt immediately to a change of country and culture, especially when they are very young (Grosjean, 2010). However, many language narratives report issues of adaptation. Hoffman (1989) documents how she struggled to adapt to Canada when she moved there from Poland as a young teenager.

It is not rare for young children to experience a “silent period” when they migrate with their families abroad. For Igoa (1995) who worked for many years with young immigrant children in an education setting:

if there is a characteristic of the uprooting experience that appears to be shared by all immigrant children irrespective of nationality, economic status, family stability, or any other factor, it is the silent stage when the children experience the school culture as different from their own and when their inability to communicate with peers is caused by a language or cultural difference (ibid. p.38).

In research in bilingual education, the “silent period” is a term used to describe “periods in which learners do not produce language to any significant degree despite being exposed to large input of language (Krashen, 1981). The topic of “silent period” is controversial and the definition of “silent period” has been much challenged (Roberts, 2014). Although “silent period” seems to belong to the field of formal education, I believe that the topic is relevant for this study because two of the children in the study supposedly experienced silent periods when they started nursery school in a new language in France and Venezuela. In the literature of childhood language acquisition, children whose life began in another language, either in another country or in another culture, seem to be affected by a sense of cultural difference and the loss of cultural identity. They are suddenly confronted with starting a new life, which may mean accepting that their lives have changed forever at a time when they may still feel connected to their native land and

culture (Hoffman, 1989; Igoa, 1995). They suddenly lose “the first language self” or in other words “the self that could make itself known, to the world and to itself, in its first language”, the “self that knew how to communicate socially” (Granger 2004, p.56). This is why more recently, Bligh (2011; 2012) highlights the need to adopt a sociocultural approach to studying silent periods. As Bligh, 2011, p.4) puts it:

The linguistic perspective on the silent period leans heavily on the gaining of language competences, without recognition of the multitude of shared learning practices that might (or might not) overlap and/or run in parallel to each other. More importantly, new understandings and ways of knowing (meaning making) are acquired and distributed through participation. A sociocultural approach to bilingual learning both recognises and embraces these complexities.

Reviewing previous studies on the silent period, Roberts (2014) concludes that from a psychological viewpoint silent periods may signal psychological uncertainty, distress about the new language (Clark and Moss, 2001) or total incomprehension (Gibbons, 1985). For this study, Roberts (2014) highlights the role of the parents in the silent period of some children. In her book, reviewing a study of Itoh and Hatch (1978), Roberts (2014) shows that the constant presence of a mother in the classroom may have played a part in the silent period of a young Japanese boy of two when he started attending an American pre-school. Two of the mothers in the study described how their daughters of the same age, in a similar school situation, seem to have experienced silent periods when they started school.

In addition, when they grow older, it may be difficult for children of immigrant parents to live with the expectations and demands of one culture in the home and another at school (Birman 2006; Crul and Vermuelen, 2003).

### **3.3. The role of family in the transmission of cultural identities**

Culture has been defined as “the (historic) transmission of inherited conceptions, symbols, values and attitudes” (Geertz, 1973, cited in Martin and Nakayama, 2004, p.78). Thus, cultural identities are “subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power” (Hall, 1990). Culture enables individuals to learn how to interact with their contexts and environments by putting together behaviours, emotions and thoughts concerning their context and environment (Neuliep, 2005). Culture and the lifestyle of the community where individuals grow up influence their habits and worldviews. Worldviews determine “how individuals dress, or what they eat, what their moral code is, or what they perceive as beautiful” (Geertz, 1973, cited in Martin and Nakayama, 2004, p.78). Biculturals have two cultures they can draw from.

Identities are supposed to form in childhood and thus in families, during the primary socialisation process (Jackson, 2006). Families are social units, or communities of practice, which are constantly managing and negotiating language uses. They are viewed as socialising children through language and often have their own personal norms of language use (Lanza, 2007). However, bilingual children can also play a part in socialising their parents through the dominant language of the community that they often acquire in school. Thus, children often contribute to language shifts at home (Svendsen, 2004).

Families implement their language policies in interaction with wider socio-political and cultural forces (Li Wei, 2012, Pavlenko, 2001; 2004). Globalisation and migration have brought many changes in socio-political and cultural environments. Mixed-nationality families, which result from immigration and transnational movement or from intercultural marriages, have to decide whether to maintain the heritage languages or use the dominant language with their children (Lanza and Svendsen, 2007). Their decision is based on the “sociolinguistic ecology [both] inside and outside the home” (Spolsky, 2009, p.18) which may include significant individuals such as grandparents (Tee et al., 2009).

In addition, in bilingual families, the heritage languages are profoundly linked to speakers’ attitudes and values. Thus, some bilingual parents may experience some fear that their children might fail to develop “emotional ties” with one or more of their respective cultural or linguistic communities, develop weaker “linguistic and cultural allegiance” and potentially “deviate from their parents’ community values” (Baetens Beardsmore, 2003, p.13). However, these fears are not always founded. For Baker (2014), many bilingual children do enjoy having hyphenated identities although a few of them may experience tensions in identity. Identity changes and bilingual children normally adjust to being slightly different people in different circumstances according to who they are with.

Raising children in mixed-nationality families may be a source of conflict for intercultural couples because the language configurations of the families is different and the parents often have to negotiate different family traditions, values and beliefs. In bilingual families, parents of different nationalities and thus of different cultural backgrounds who decide to bring their child up bilingually usually talk to their children about their customs, read books to them, teach them children’s rhymes and songs. The children are used to eating food typical of the cultures of both of their parents. In addition, celebrations such as Christmas and birthdays may be adapted to include aspects from both cultural worlds. Indeed, decision-making about intergenerational transmission of language and culture is an important issue for multilingual couples (Piller, 2002a; Varro,

1998). In addition, modern mixed-nationality families like any other families may include structures such as single parents or caregivers from different generations. When there is a family break-up, the language of the family may also change.

The use of different languages is an issue that becomes problematic to some mothers when they start a family. Social pressure plays an important role in the family language policies (King and Fogle, 2006a). And mothers tend to react strongly to their experiences of migration. Studies suggest that mothers feel responsible for their children's acquisition of language and that society generally assumes and expects mothers to transmit languages. As a result, there are social pressures on mothers through public discourse and personal networks to foster the use of mother tongue with the children (King and Fogle, 2006a). Mills (2004) studied a group of Pakistani mothers in the UK focusing on “on what makes someone identify with a mother tongue and what that reveals of their sense of self” (ibid. p.162). Mills shows that language is an essential part of her participants’ identity as individuals, as well as their identities as mothers, and that it is therefore crucial for her participants to transmit their languages to their children as well as promoting the dominant language for educational purposes. For Mills’ participants, being a mother meant fostering the use of their mother tongue with and by their children as much as fostering the values of their religion and other ethnic markers. Maintaining the use of their mother tongue signalled their attachment to their heritage group, their cultural and religious values. Furthermore, Mills’ mothers believed that their children would acquire these values through speaking the heritage language.

Bilinguals seem to be better equipped than monolinguals to understand different cultures because switching between languages enables them to think differently and appreciate that there is more than one point of view (Pavlenko, 2011). For the author (Ibid., p.4):

Only in the world imagined to be monolingual could one consider the possibility of language “determining” people’s thoughts, without asking what happens with those who grow up speaking two or more languages, and those who learn other languages in life.

New ways of thinking can also be acquired unconsciously. Bialystok (2015) hints that learning new languages facilitates the unconscious learning of new ways of thinking, while for Pavlenko (2011), it is time to “discard the narrow search for evidence for or against linguistic relativity and to engage in broad explorations of thinking and speaking in two languages” (ibid. p.252). This includes studying the inner speech of bilinguals, which are “ways of perceiving, conceptualising and framing objects, actions, events and

phenomena”. Hoffman (1989) talks of losing her inner language in Polish when she started acquiring English:

I have no interior language, and without it, interior images – those images through which we assimilate the external world, through which we take it in, love it, make it our own – become blurred to (Hoffman, 1989, p.107).

### **3.4. Family language planning**

The extent to which families can plan the development of their children bilingualism has been much debated (King and Fogle, 2006a). Today, the globalisation of our societies and the increase in job mobility are giving parents more opportunities to raise their children bilingually. However, as seen in Section 2.3, parents have to plan and use strategies to help their children become bilingual. Family language planning is very important for active bilingualism (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004) because it sets the frame for child-caretaker interactions (De Houwer, 2009b; 2014). It also gives an insight on parents’ language ideologies and on social ideologies about both language and parenting.

Recently, a new area of research called Family Language Policy (FLP) has been developed using insights from research in sociolinguistics, anthropology and language socialization. It combines research on child language acquisition, early second language learning and socialization, as well as children’s bilingualism (Caldas, 2006; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; De Houwer, 2009a; 2009b; Döpke, 1992; Gafaranga, 2011; King and Fogle, 2006a; 2006b; 2013; Lanza, 2007). FLP has been defined as:

explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home among family members, and provides an integrated overview of research on how languages are managed, learned, and negotiated with families (King et al., 2008, p.907).

FLP is interested in how and why families, who are living in society, maintain and transmit heritage languages, which is of interest to this study. It also looks at shift of languages in multilingual families and communities by examining how the wider political, social and economic forces influence language planning (Li Wei, 2012; King 2011). For example, FLP questions why some children go on developing bilingually while other do not and how this is linked to the way parents promote particular languages including the heritage language (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013).

Research into bilingual first language acquisition has also shown that children acquire their languages differently depending on the native languages of their parents, the language(s) of the community, and the strategies that the parents use with the children (De Houwer, 2009b). Researchers suggest various forms of parental support which

include the promotion of the heritage language, the regular exposure and use of both languages, with a variety of speakers and in a range of contexts (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Caldas, 2006; De Houwer, 2009b). Parents need to be supportive of their children's use of language, in particular when the children use a language inappropriately and mix languages for example (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). The parents can implement strategies to model the language and encourage production (Lanza, 2007). Research also shows that lack of language planning in families may result in language shift.

Family language ideologies, or beliefs about language and language use, are said to be the "driving force" in family language management (Kheirkhah, 2016, p.13; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; 2013; King et al., 2008). Language planning is influenced by the beliefs parents have about language (Spolsky, 2004) and about their ability to transmit languages. De Houwer (2009b) also suggests that childhood language acquisition depends on the parents' attitudes about particular styles of language and the way their children should learn languages (ibid. p.85). In addition, parents are often influenced by their personal experiences of learning and using languages. Lastly, FLP can be influenced by the language ideologies of the communities in which the families live (Lanza, 2007; King, Fogle and Logan-Terry, 2008) which were discussed in section 2.4. These language ideologies are often driven by governmental policies, public discourses on bilingualism and the perceived value, power and utility of languages (Baker, 2001). Today, the benefits of bilingualism and biculturalism in terms of cognition, awareness of language and sensitivity to other cultures, are better recognised (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). However, to become bilingual, children still need a supportive language learning environment because they are influenced by the behaviour and attitudes to languages of the people around them.

Parents are also influenced by the language they use to communicate with each other (Piller, 2001; 2002a; Lanza and Svendsen, 2007). Research in FLP suggests that it is very important for the parents to support each other. In my data, the participants commented on the support they received from their spouses. This aligns with what the research says about the central role that parents play in providing the right sociolinguistic environment to enable their children to develop active bilingualism. For De Houwer (2006; 2013), parents of bilingual children should realise and accept their role as active agents in their children's language learning. They also should realise the importance of the input they provide to their children and adopt effective strategies to develop their children's bilingualism (ibid.).

FLP also study how the families manage language transmission in practice and what sort of linguistic resources they use to transmit heritage language and control the language environment of their bilingual children. These resources can range from using



the heritage language in interactions with the children (Spolsky, 2004) to travelling to the home country of the parent, visiting heritage language speakers or selecting children's peers. Based on their expectations about their children's language and literacy development (Curd-Christiansen, 2013), the parents can also control the school language environment of their children by enrolling the children in schools that promote the heritage language. Such control of the children's language environment influences the children's language socialization and the language that is used in the families (Spolsky, 2009). However, parental authority and control is not enough to guarantee the development of children's bilingualism (Kirsch, 2012). Parental consistency in implementing policies, children's age, and support from the societal and educational context are all required (Döpke, 1992; Lanza, 2007).

Lastly, language maintenance in bilingual families is a complex and emotionally loaded choice that needs to be investigated because it affects both parents and children not only linguistically but psychologically and emotionally (King and Fogle, 2006). Family practices and language choices are influenced by positive emotions about bilingualism in the families. The choices about family languages may be emotionally motivated in order to create strong family ties and facilitate intergenerational relations (Tannenbaum, 2012; Pavlenko, 2004). However, family practices themselves can generate a lot of emotions. For example, Piller (2002b) warns that the quest for perfectly balanced bilingual children can result in both parental disappointment and children's sense of failure.

Equally, the individual personalities of parents and children may affect the development of active bilingualism (Romaine, 1995). At around the age of three or four, bilingual children may become reluctant, or even refuse to speak one of their languages. Older children, schooled in the dominant language may also feel more at ease using the dominant language. This might be problematic for the parent of the heritage language and create tensions in the families because the parents might have to shift languages and thus act against their own language ideologies (De Houwer, 2009b; 2013; King and Fogle, 2016b; 2013). A refusal to speak a language can be long-term, temporary or just occurring in certain situations. For example, some bilingual children may refuse to speak a language out of stubbornness or to oppose the use of one of their languages in a different context from the one they are used to (Harding-Esch and Riley, 2003).

The field of family language planning is vast as it includes ideologies, management and practices which interact with each other (King et al., 2008; Schwartz, 2010) and researchers in the field advocate more empirical research to investigate "how the interactional locus of language learning – language practices – is shaped and organized"

(King et al., 2008, p.917). In the data chapters of this study, I examine the language ideologies of my participants, as well as how the bilingual families I interviewed managed and implemented familial bilingualism.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

The topic of bilingual cultural identities is vast and in this chapter, I only aimed at indicating some aspects of the topic that seemed to be relevant to my study to understand how my participants might be constructing their bilingual identities and those of their children, as well as the linguistic challenges and emotional issues they might face when developing bilingual families. I also looked at the role that family language planning played in the formation of bilingual cultural identities.

To do so, I focus on some of the themes about cultural identity that arose from the data that I investigated in the literature of applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and sociology, in the fields of second language acquisition and family language policies, to understand how bilingual cultural identities are formed through language. I first looked at how bilingual identities are conceptualised and found that language plays a very important part in the formation of identities and that language and identity are thus very closely linked (Jardine, Kristeva and Gora, 1980; Norton, 2010; Kramsch, 2012). There seems to be a consensus that individuals are the agents of their identities because identities are viewed as personal projects (Jardine, Kristeva and Gora, 1980; Holliday, 2010) that are changeable (Kristeva, 1986; Norton, 2000; Riley, 2007; Miller, 2009; Lantolf, 2000, Pavlenko, 2001; 2008a; 2011; Kramsch, 2007; 2009). Identities reflect the way individuals believe other see them and have become quite fluid (Holliday et al., 2004; Dervin, 2011; 2013). At the same time, language also indexes belonging (Jardine, Kristeva and Gora, 1980; Joseph, 2004; 2006). Identities are multiple and can be fragmented while some identities may become salient at certain times in the lives of individuals (Abdallah-Preteuille, 2006). This is the case for parental identities, which I was interested in my study because my participants positioned themselves as bilingual parents although they also spoke at length about their personal and professional identities. This may be due to the fact that identities are negotiated socially (Schrauf, 2000; Li Wei et al., 2008). Individuals are motivated to join specific groups in specific contexts (Canagarajah, 2004; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2001; 2004; Cameron, 2012).

In addition, culture is encoded in languages and the acquisition of languages means the possibility of acquiring different worldviews that may facilitate the integration in the new country. However, acculturation affects the first language and culture of the

bilinguals who move to a new country (Pavlenko, 1997, Kramsch, 2009, Fell, 2012). It may also affect the family lives of bilinguals because acculturation is not experienced equally by family members (Berry, 2006).

Family language ideologies influence the choice of language that bilingual parents and especially mothers wish to transmit to their children (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Lanza, 2007; De Houwer, 2009b, 2014). A prestigious second language is seen as a form of social capital (Norton, 2000; 2013; Bourdieu, 2001). And as such, the transmitted second language can serve as a means of reproducing existing social identities or constructing new social identities (Piller, 2000; Kramsch, 2006; 2009; 2012c). However, bilingual identities are vulnerable because they depend on changing life circumstances and relations of power can affect social interactions between second language learners and native language speakers (Norton Pierce, 1995).

The concepts of fluid identities of bilinguals that can be negotiated socially and the link to social integration in the new countries of residence are the key concepts of this chapter. These concepts help to illuminate what my participants say about their cultural identity and will be taken up in the data analysis in chapter seven in which experiences of school integration are discussed and chapter eight in which the participants discuss how they deal with issues of power and identity as well as living and integrating into new environments.

In the next chapter, I examine how emotion can be conceptualised in order to understand the link between language and emotion in the context of familial bilingualism.

## **Chapter four**

### **Conceptualisation of emotion and links to language in the context of familial bilingualism**

In bilingual families, language may take a much more emotionally loaded meaning than in monolingual families, because bilinguals have a different family dynamic as they do not share the same language and identity (De Houwer, 2009b, pp.326-327).

#### **4.1. Introduction**

Human emotions have been traditionally studied in the different disciplines of psychology, linguistics and anthropology. However, in the last two decades, there has been a big surge of interest in emotions in a multitude of fields including neurobiology, cognitive psychology and linguistics, social and cultural psychology as well as different areas of applied linguistics and multilingualism research to cite some to the fields of interest in this study. In this chapter, I focus on some concepts from the literature of psychology, sociology, second language acquisition and bilingualism that may provide some insights on what my participants said about the emotions they experienced in the context of familial bilingualism.

In the first part of this chapter, I first examine definitions of emotions and the link between emotion and language. I then look at how emotions are lexicalized and how bilingual individuals choose languages to express emotions. In the second part of the chapter, I examine the two specific emotional experiences that were described by the participants in the study, which are the emotional experience of learning a second language and being foreign, and the emotional experience of parenting bilingual children.

#### **4.2. Definitions of emotion and the links between emotion and language**

Like bilingualism and identity, which were examined in the last two chapters, definitions of emotions seem rather elusive in the literature of psychology, sociology and second language acquisition in which emotions are often contrasted with feelings. The difference between the two terms seem to reside in the fact that contrary to feelings, the term emotion - which is formed from the old French verb, *émouvoir* (from the latin “*emovere*”) - evokes notions of motion or movement, or in other words of physical

reactions. Psychologists define emotions as “strong feelings” that trigger physical reactions. For them, emotions are mostly biologically based. Individuals who experience an emotion, such as fear, for example, experience a rise in blood pressure, which alerts them that they are experiencing a strong emotion (Barrett, 2006a; 2006b). And this rise in blood pressure can be measured which suits the needs of quantitative research. However, it has also been argued that it is the emotion that may trigger the physical reaction (Barrett, 2006a; 2006b). Contrary to emotions, feelings are said not to produce such obvious physical reactions and for this reason, they are more difficult to study (ibid.).

Linguists are divided on whether emotions can be measured and isolated. For Wierzbicka (1999a; 1999b), emotions, unlike feelings, can be measured and isolated which makes them more easy to study rigorously while Pavlenko (2008a) claims that emotions should not be studied separately because they are too complex to be studied in isolation. Pavlenko (2008a) favours studying the relation between emotions and language or in her words “the multiple ties that link emotions to languages” (p.42), a view I support as I agree with Pavlenko that “the relationship between emotions and multilingualism plays out in different ways on different levels in the human mind and its sociocultural environment” (ibid. p.42) and needs to be investigated further.

The link of emotions with psychology and society is evidenced in research on bilingualism. In their classic text, Hamers and Blanc (1989) built on a previous claim that bilinguals “develop patterns of behaviour that must be unique to their psychological state” (Grosjean, 1985, cited in Hamers and Blanc, 1989, p.21). The authors create the concept of “bilinguality” which they define as the psychological state of an individual who “has access to more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication” (Hamers and Blanc, 1989, p.6). They contrast “bilinguality” to “bilingualism”, which they define as a “state of two languages in contact at the collective level “with the result that two codes can be used in the same interaction” (ibid. p.14). For the authors, “bilinguality” “provides bilinguals with a social competence that enables them to become full members of the communities, in which they live” (Hamers and Blanc, 1989, p.134). Bilingualism and bilinguality “coexist and form a complex phenomenon that involves individual, interpersonal, intergroup and societal layers” (ibid. p.6). The distinction between bilingualism and bilinguality is important in my study because it highlights the emotional impact that bilingualism has on individuals. It is also relevant in my study because some participants had experiences of living in bilingual countries (Spanish-Catalan, Spanish-Galician).

The specific relation between emotions and languages has been further studied in the fields of psychology and sociology. Barrett et al. (2007), claim that when any

individual experiences emotions, language is needed to make sense of these experiences. Language enables individuals to decode the complex information they receive both from their bodies (physical reactions) and from the world around them. The authors explain that individuals use language to supplement the clues they receive from other people's face and behaviour. Thus, language is used to reduce the uncertainty inherent in most natural facial behaviours. "Emotion words (implicitly or explicitly) serve as an internal context to constrain the meaning of a face during an instance of emotion perception" (Barrett et al., 2007, p.327). The authors (ibid. p.330) further highlight the importance of language acquisition in the understanding of emotions when they write that:

General language proficiency and exposure to emotion words in conversation play a role in helping children develop an understanding of mental states, such as emotions, and allow them to attribute emotion to other people on the basis of situational cues.

In his theory of emotions, Burkitt (2014) offers a sociological perspective. The author argues that emotions cannot be reduced to "neurophysiological processes, but are complexes of bodily sensations and feelings, understood in relation to particular situations against a backdrop of social and personal history" (ibid. p.57). Thus, the author suggests that emotions should be studied in context by focusing on how humans make and experience meaning (ibid. p.2). For Burkitt, research on emotions should focus on embodied individuals within patterns of relationships because it is in relation to others or in certain contexts that feelings (such as the feelings of being angry, for example) are identified as specific emotions. As the author puts it (Ibid. p.8):

We grow up as social language users, speech, like feeling, is one of the uses and modulations of our body, so that what we feel and think is never something different from the sense of speech and, more generally, of language and social meaning.

Thus, individuals distinguish emotions through social meaning and context. Like Pavlenko (2008a), Burkitt (2014) claims that it is impossible to isolate, measure or study feelings and emotions independently. For Burkitt (ibid.), emotions depend on the interpretation that individuals make of situations and this interpretation is partly conditioned by previous experiences of social relations, including class relations, that individual have had. This, in turn, may mean that some emotions can be felt in retrospect at the time of the interpretation rather than immediately (Dewey, 1929/1958, cited in Burkitt, 2014, p.8).

### 4.3. Lexicalization of emotions

Undoubtedly, language plays an important part in understanding and processing emotion. The language of emotions can be studied through discourse analysis and the studies of everyday emotional communication (Tannen, 2001). However, there is a distinction between language and emotions and the lexicalization of emotions. The latter raises the issue of the ability of bilinguals to understand and process emotions in different languages.

To start with, the lexicalization of emotions raises the issue of whether emotions are universal or culture-bound. This topic has been extensively investigated by linguists who studied semantic categories of emotions and feelings. Wierzbicka (1999b) and Russell (1991), studied whether emotions can be categorised according to language and culture. For the authors (*ibid.*), while some emotions are universal, others are culturally constructed and serve to give information on the different cultures. Russell (1991) claims that individuals use words for emotions to categorise events that are part of their personal and social reality. For Wierzbicka (1992), feelings are only lexicalized in a particular culture because they are salient in that culture. She gives the example of the older Polish term “tesknota”, which used to describe a kind of vague sadness, associated with the “sadness caused by separation” (Wierzbicka, 1999a, p.125). The term was used by Polish exiles who wrote about their feelings of nostalgia after the partitions of Poland at the end of 18th century. For Wierzbicka (2003, p.579):

If many bilingual and bicultural people say that the existence of distinct words for emotion has made a difference to the texture of their emotional life, can a person who has not lived his or her life through two languages establish by means of argument that such people are wrong?

In her research, Wierzbicka also studies the French term for “grief” and points out that although French speakers do experience grief they do not seem to have an exact equivalent term in the French culture (Wierzbicka, 2003, p.82). Nonetheless, the author finds the presence of grief in French novels. This leads the author to advocate the reading of the foreign literature to know about other cultures. Pavlenko and Driagina (2007) also highlight the importance of narratives, in particular, oral narratives, to illustrate language use in context and remedy the lack of equivalent terms in a language. The knowledge of emotion words is viewed as essential by some specialists on bilingualism like Dewaele (2006; 2010; 2012), who studied whether emotions are more socially or cultural constructed. For the author (2010), an accurate knowledge of emotion words is important for bilinguals because misunderstanding the emotionality of a word can “be far more

embarrassing than phonological, morphological or syntactical errors” (pp.6-7). Another issue highlighted by Dewaele (2010) is that non-native speakers often have to be too explicit when talking about their emotions because they often lack the metaphors and figures of speech that allow individuals to convey subtle meanings.

For Schrauf and Sanchez (2004), the working emotional vocabulary of individuals is smaller than the overall language emotion vocabulary available in a particular language. It differs from one language to another and is made up of the terms that individuals need to describe their emotional experiences. The vocabulary of negative emotions seems to be larger because individuals, both cross-culturally and cross-generationally, process their positive or negative emotional experiences differently. They tend to express their negative emotions in more detail than their positive emotions (Schrauf and Sanchez, 2004). In addition, the working emotional vocabulary seems to vary with age. Older individuals seem to become better at regulating their emotional responses and prioritising emotional information (Castelli and Lanza, 2011). For Marian and Kaushanskaya (2008), older people have a more diverse emotional vocabulary than younger people but use more positive emotion words (Marian and Kaushanskaya, 2008).

The use of emotional vocabulary is also affected by the age of migration. For Marian and Kaushanskaya (2008), the earlier the age of migration, the more positive emotion words are used in the narratives in the second language. The authors also claim that bilinguals may express more emotions in their second language. The authors studied Russian-English bilingual immigrants and found that when their participants talked about their experiences of immigration in their second language (English), they expressed more emotions. Their narratives in Russian were shorter and contained more negative emotion words. The authors suggest that bilinguals might add more emotional words when using a second language because it helps them make up for the emotional distance effect (Marian and Kaushanskaya, 2008).

For Schrauf and Durazo-Arvizu (2006), emotion and language are an integral part of memories. For them, the emotional language of individuals is the language in which emotional memories are articulated. The authors (ibid.) argue that, in an immigrant context, each language activates memories of the events that took place in that language. This aligns with the classic theories of Vygotsky’s (1962) for whom experiences and memories are normally encoded through language and more specifically in the language in which the recalled event took place (Aycicegi and Harris, 2004). When the language used to evoke memories is the same language in which the memories took place, the intensity of the emotions is said to be better preserved and the language of the experience richer (Javier et al., 1993; Dewaele, 2010). New research on emotional acculturation



shows that exposure to the majority culture increases immigrants' fit with the average majority patterns of emotions. (De Leersnyder et al., 2011; De Leersnyder et al., 2014).

Lastly, individuals do not use the same part of speech to express their emotions depending on the cultures they belong to. In the Western world, which has more individualistic cultures, individuals tend to use more verbs and nouns. In the non-Western world, which has more dependent cultures, individuals use more verbs designated exclusively to express emotions. Pavlenko and Driagina (2007) give the example of anger, which is expressed by an adjective in English (angry) and is often associated with "state verbs such as to be, change-of-state verbs to become and to get, and perception verbs to seem, to appear, to look and to feel" while Russian speakers may prefer to use "verbs and, in particular, intransitive and reflexive emotion verbs that mark aspect and duration of particular actions and processes" (ibid. p.215). For the authors, who refer to Wierzbicka's research (1992), the choice between an adjective and a verb reflects the dominant conceptualizations of emotions in Russian and English. In Russian, emotions are conceptualized as "inner activities in which one engages more or less voluntary" while in English they are "conceptualized as passive states resulting from either external or past causes". Thus, in Russian, *сердйтся* would translate as 'to be cross at someone/angry with someone' or *обижатся* "to be hurt by someone/to feel upset with someone" (ibid. p.216).

To sum up, if language is used to decode emotion in social contexts and if emotion words are also culturally constructed, the lexicalization of emotions may represent a challenge for second language speakers. This could further have an effect in bilingual families. The difficulty of being subtle when using emotion words, in particular, could be quite challenging in intimate relationships.

#### **4.4. Choice of languages to express emotions**

Languages are often linked to memories, especially memories of childhood events and it is assumed that the emotional language is the first language due to the special bond between children and caregivers. In a bilingual family, each parent may use their first language with their children in order to try to establish a natural emotional bond (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). However, bilingual individuals can perfectly express their emotions in two languages. When they become more proficient in a second language, bilinguals may even prefer to use their second language to express emotions depending on the context they are in. Thus, for Marian and Kaushanskaya (2008), the emotional language of a bilingual can be the language of preference rather than the language of proficiency. For

the authors, the type of emotion also affects the emotional expressiveness of bilinguals. For example, terms of endearment may be experienced as stronger in another language (Dewaele and Pavlenko, 2002). Pavlenko (2008, pp.22-23) describes her own experiences of expressing her emotions either in English or Russian depending on whom she is talking to:

I love you,” I whisper to my English-speaking partner. “Babulechka, ia tak skuchaiu po tebe” [Grandma, I miss you so much], I tenderly say on the phone to my Russian-speaking grandmother.

Incidentally, for Burkitt (2014), spontaneous expressions of affect like “I love you” are learned and interiorized as second nature by individuals. Bilinguals may have distinct emotional attachments to their languages and emotional attachments made later in life (love affairs, friendships) may create bonds that may conflict with or replace the bonds with the first language (Weinreich, 1953, cited in Burkitt, 2014). For example, Huston (1986), a bilingual mother, chose to use her second language with her daughter because her first language was linked to negative experiences in childhood. Thus, Huston, who was abandoned by her English-speaking mother when she was six, reports being unable to use that language with her daughter because it evokes painful memories. In the context of language acquisition, Kristeva (2005) offers a psychoanalytical perspective on language transmission. For Kristeva, when mothers transmit their languages to their children, they re-learn their own languages by revisiting their pasts and filling the gaps between affect and cognition.

Using a second language can also be experienced as emancipatory (Heinz, 2001; Pavlenko, 2006). It releases the speakers from the constraints of the environments in which they grew up in. Kramsch (2007; 2009) reports one of her participants as saying that for her speaking in a second language was like “taking a break from the world I live in”. Culturally, using a second language may release individuals from some cultural constraints. For example, it may be more acceptable to use swear words and talk about perceived embarrassing topics in a second language (Dewaele, 2004; 2012). Dewaele and Pavlenko (2002) found this to be the case of a Chinese participant who was able to escape Chinese social convention by swearing in English, a thing she was not able to do in her native language. In addition, certain emotions may be easier to discuss in a second language because of the potential emotional distance this language provides (Bond and Lai, 1986). Huston (2002, p.49) relates that for her:

The French language in general (...) was to me less emotion-fraught, and therefore less dangerous, than my mother tongue. It was cold and I approached it coldly.

In this context, the choice of language used in therapy is revealing. Huston (ibid.) claims that she could not finish her therapy because it was conducted in French which was her second language. In that language, she was more in control of emotions. Thus, individuals may process their different languages differently. Late bilinguals and foreign language users may process their second language semantically but not affectively (Pavlenko, 2012). However, what Huston's example demonstrates is that language choice is far from being a neutral phenomenon (Pavlenko, 2004; Piller, 2002a, 2013; Yamamoto, 2005). Pavlenko (2008, p.314) points out that:

Besides language choice possibly acting as an instrument for exclusion (or inclusion), the fact that the use of a particular language is for many people inextricably bound to a person's identity means that language choice can be a powerful symbol in family interaction.

The language that children choose to speak at home may be problematic for bilingual parents. At home, children get the chance to practise a social language. They normally model themselves socially on their parents, siblings and other relatives who are part of their lives. However, if children decide not to speak their parent's first languages, the latter may feel that their children reject their cultural identities (Schechter and Bailey, 1998, cited in De Houwer, 2009b, p.325) although the rejection may just be a way for children to express their individuality and assert their independence (Housen and Baetens Beardsmore, 1987). For Hoffman (1989, p.146), second socialisation distanced her from her parents' emotional world.

My mother says I'm becoming "English". This hurts me because I know she means I'm becoming cold. I'm not colder than I've ever been, but I'm learning to be less demonstrative.

Norton (2000), who focuses her research on the link between language learning and the construction of social identity, points out that children are not only a link to the past but they are also a link to the future which may explain why the children's choice of language may be problematic for some parents.

Lastly, monolingual parents may come to resent their bilingual partners speaking languages with the children who exclude them even though they are not always present when the interactions are taking place (Pavlenko, 2008).

#### **4.5. The emotional experience of learning and using a second language**

The ever-changing nature of the linguistic situation of bilinguals is an important variable in the study of bilingualism and emotions. It seems that individuals develop a language identity, or language ego, in reference to the language they speak (Guiora et al., 1972). Thus, for Brown (1980), the identities of individuals are bound up with their languages, as “it is in the communicative process that such identities are confirmed, shaped and reshaped” (Brown, 1980, cited in Block, 2014, p.53-54). As a result, adult learners who have spent a lifetime forming their ego in their first language may sometimes find the experience of communicating in another language quite difficult. Contrary to very small children who have no particular inhibitions, adults may feel inhibited when they speak a second language because they dislike looking stupid. Language fossilisation, foreign accent or having to code-switch may contribute to feelings of inadequacies in adults.

As seen previously, it is common for second language learners to experience fossilisation in their second language. In second language acquisition, Kramsch (2006) made the link between fossilisation and emotions. For the author (*ibid.*), second language learners may be ambivalent about identifying with native speakers through language because they may want to retain their own language and identity. This might lead second language learners to learn the forms of the new language but to retain their own accent and grammar for example. The process of acculturation itself may lead to acculturative stress for the family as a whole (Berry, 1990; 1997; Lazarus, 1997). The parents, who migrate, are living in exile. They live away from their own countries and are often separated from the language of their own people (Pavlenko, 2008; Kristeva, 2014). This can result in attrition (Köpke et al., 2007). Bilingual children who are schooled in the new country normally end up speaking the new languages better than their parents and may resent their parents for being what they perceive as incompetent users of the dominant language (de Houwer, 2009b) because it signals the parents’ difference and by extension their differences. The children may resent being seen with their parents in public as commented by one of the participants in the study. Children may even lose respect for their parents, especially in adolescence (Tseng and Tuligni, 2000, cited in De Houwer, 2009, p.311). This is largely documented in language narratives such as Hoffman’s (1989) or Rodriguez’s (1982) which document how children simply cannot understand how adults may have a foreign accent, for example, when they have been living in a country as long or longer than they have. In the quote below, Rodriguez (1982, p.13) comments on his parents’ efforts to speak English, a language they were not very proficient in:

But it was one thing for me to speak English with difficulty. It was more troubling for me to hear my parents speak in public: their high-whining vowels and guttural consonants; their sentences that got stuck with “eh” and “ah” sounds; the confused syntax; the hesitant rhythm of sounds so different from the way gringos speak.

Some scholars claim that there is a controversial “critical period” to acquire languages without an accent and therefore, it is impossible to speak a language without a foreign accent if the language is acquired after puberty (Johnson and Newport, 1989; Birdsong, 2013). Being aware of having a foreign accent when speaking a second language can have a strong impact on individuals. Kristeva describes the “private agony” of second language speakers who having achieved proficiency may be constantly reminded that they do not sound like native speakers from their intonation, which has a different melody from that of first language speakers (Kristeva, 1988, p.21). The issue of being viewed as foreign can be problematic because it may add to the emotional toll of some bilingual parents. However, for other researchers, it is possible for bilinguals to speak a second language without a foreign accent provided they are motivated and fully immersed in their new language (Tomatis, 1991). Semprun (1963) who migrated to France from Spain, before the civil war, talks about his social motivation to speak French with a French accent so as not to be stigmatised as a Spanish political refugee. His effort was so successful that later on when he was released from a German camp, the French who were returning to France with him did not realise that he was not French (Semprun, 1963, p.119).

Second language learners can also experience code-switching as an emotional phenomenon. Emerging evidence suggests that some multilinguals code-switch more frequently in certain emotional states (Dewaele and Li Wei, 2014). Dewaele (2004; 2012), for example, gives lots of anecdotal evidence of second language learners code-switching to swear in their native language when they experience strong emotions.

Research in bilingualism, by Dewaele and Pavlenko (2002), indicates that the relationships between emotion and particular languages are very complex and multidimensional. Their research builds on research in SLA. While the latter used to focus on cognitive and social perspectives, research by Kramsch (2006; 2009; 2009b) examines the subjectivities of second language learners and reveals a wealth of emotions. Kramsch examines the subject position of her participants and considers language through the different lenses of symbolic power, perception and desire, and subjectivity. For Kramsch (2009, p.2):

As a symbolic system, language constructs the very reality it refers to ...As a sign system, language elicits subjective responses in the speakers themselves: emotions, memories, fantasies, projections, identifications.

Kramersch's participants describe feeling physically overwhelmed by their new language and talk about their feelings of tiredness. When asked to choose a phrase, expression, or metaphor to describe their experience of language acquisition, they described bodily experiences that appear to be physically painful. According to the author (2009, p.60), these experiences resemble:

intimate encounter(s) between learners and bodies, between the body and its new mode of meaning-making", aesthetic experiences, or a "homecoming" of sorts.

However, cognitive scientists explain that bilinguals may feel tired because their two languages are constantly active in the brain (Bialystok, 2015; Kroll and Bialystok, 2013; Marian and Spivey, 2003). On a psychological level, the mind of bilinguals might feel overloaded.

As seen previously, Kramersch (2012c) also talks about issues of identity that may affect second language learners emotionally. The author (ibid.) suggests that bilinguals may feel illegitimate when they learn and use a second language because it is essentially someone else's language. In her research, the author looks at language memoirs and in particular Hoffman's (1989). Kramersch (ibid.) suggests that although Hoffman sounds like a legitimate American researcher, she describes herself as illegitimate because she does not feel American enough to use English in the American way as evidenced in the following quote:

Then, as I try to respond with equal spontaneity, I reach frantically for the requisite tone, the requisite accent. A Texas drawl crosses a New England clip; a groovy half-sentence competes with an elegantly satirical comment. I want to speak some kind of American, but which kind to hit? "Gee," I say, "what a trip, in every sense of the word."

Tom is perfectly satisfied with this response. I sound natural enough, I sound like anybody else but I can hear the artifice, and for a moment, I clutch. Paralysis threatens. Speechlessness used to be one of the common symptoms of classic hysteria. I feel as though in me, hysteria is brought on by tongue-tied speechlessness. (Hoffman, 1989, p.219).

Based on studies of second language writers, Kramersch (2009; 2012c) notes that feeling like an impostor when using a second language is rather common. In addition, due to the way bilinguals are often compared to monolinguals (Pavlenko, 2008; Pennycook, 2010), balanced bilinguals may be prompt to report negative experiences regarding their bilingual emotional expressiveness because they may compare themselves to "idealised", "prescribed", and "normal" monolinguals. For Kramersch (2009; 2012c), however,

Hoffman is an authentic speaker of English unlike another author, Stavans (2001) who she described as legitimate but feeling unauthentic because his different roots are not authenticated. Slavans has had several experiences of migration and speaks Spanish, Yiddish, Hebrew and English.

What does it mean to be American? English was not, as I had heard, the greater equalizer, at least not at the moment a citizen's is sworn in. Is immigration not, first and foremost, about reinventing yourself in a different land, not only socially and culturally but also verbally? What did my own experience entail? Transplanting oneself in the soil of another tongue, finding some degree of comfort in a foreign language, I told myself, leads at first to a sense of deterioration rather than improvement, of loss rather than gain. One gets the impression of ceasing to be – in Spanish, the feeling of *no estar del todo*. The immigrant feels trapped in the space in between words and in the intricacies of the journey. (Stavans, 2001, p.184).

In the last quote, Slavans also touches on what Kristeva (2014) describes as “polymorphic mutism” when migrants no longer speak their mother language and are not yet proficient in their new language. They can thus experience a “speechless agony” over having “cut off the maternal source of words”. And not feeling proficient enough may last a long while as illustrated by Hoffman (1989, p.119):

It will take years before I pick and choose, from the Babel of American language, the style of wits that fits. I will take years of practice before its nuances and patterns snap smartly into the synapses of my brain so they can generate verbal electricity. It will take years of observing the discreet sufferings of the corporate classes before I understand the equally discreet charm of New Yorker cartoons.

Pavlenko (2003) has also studied the process of “(re)construction of self” that immigrant language learners undergo when learning a second language. For Pavlenko (ibid. p.352), authenticity represented her:

right to retain my own accented feminine voice and my multiple perspectives  
those of a researcher and an L2 user, a Russian refugee and an American  
researcher, an academic and a feminist.

Individuals are not blank slates emotionally (Burkitt, 2014, p.8). Throughout their lives, they may develop habitual ways of acting and responding emotionally to given situations. For bilinguals who migrate to a new country, these ways of acting and using languages are based on past patterns of relationships and actions, which were normally experienced in another country. Furthermore, these patterns may become dispositions or “ways of acting in particular situations that are not wholly within our conscious control and are, thus, partly involuntary” (ibid. p.6). For this reason, once in a new country,

bilinguals may find it hard to fit in and resort to acting up (Kristeva, 1988), whether they are conscious of it or not.

#### **4.6. The emotional experience of parenting bilingual children**

In this study, Kramsch's (2009; 2012) concepts of authenticity and legitimacy developed in the last section made me reflect on how bilingual parents position themselves in society and whether the concepts of authenticity and legitimacy could be used to explain how my parent participants felt. Work was very important in the narratives of my participants. The two fathers, in particular, seemed to define themselves through their professional lives (Burkitt, 2014, p.104). They used their careers in order to construct a positive narrative about themselves. Burkitt refers to careers as "moral careers" or "any social strand of any person's course through life" (ibid. p.104). During the course of their lives, individuals experience many changes of selves. They review the way they view themselves and others and in particular the way they view themselves and their careers. This may even lead them to distort some facts to look good about themselves (ibid.). Burkitt (ibid.) cites the case of a participant who reconstructs his career, narrating how he consciously chose to make his career moves to come across as powerful although, in reality, he had not been able to control his changes of circumstances or self. Burkitt concludes that "No matter how powerful an individual may be there are always limits to that power, and this shapes biography and influences narrative (ibid. p.105). Kristeva (1988) also believe that foreigners are individuals who value work because it is a source of success but also a personal quality that can be migrated across borders and properties. Parents, who have benefited from bilingualism, may view bilingualism as an important advantage (Piller, 2001; 2015). This advantage constitutes a Bourdieusian investment in their children's economic and cultural future (De Houwer, 2009b). It seems that generally, in society:

promoting additive bilingualism, like promoting early math, early music and early movement skills, has become part of mainstream parenting (Rosenfelt, 2005, p.264).

Thus, promoting bilingualism is linked to culture-specific notions of what makes a "good parent", which are implicit in public advice and recommendations to parents. This was demonstrated by Okita (2002) who investigated Japanese mothers living in the UK and found that their identity as "good mother" was linked to the information they had on bilingualism.



At the same time, some parents may worry that bilingualism may lead their children to form weaker emotional bonds with both of their cultural communities (Baetens-Breadmore, 1986; Piller, 2000; 2001; Okita, 2002). Mills (2001; 2004) examines the views of mothers from Pakistani heritage focusing on aspiration, child rearing, gender, self-definition, identity. The author identifies issues of language ideologies, bilingual language practices, the construction of motherhood in linguistic minority communities, and women's responses to their positioning with respect to the languages of their cultural inheritances. She concludes that the mothers in the study feel very responsible for their children's future. They want their children to acquire both the heritage language and the dominant language to do well in life. Mills (2001) also examined the role that language has in the lives of a group of Asian children and young children and concludes that language is very important in the children's lives and that lack of proficiency in the heritage language do not prevent children from linking languages to their parents' core values.

Within society, parents may also feel that they are lacking emotional support from the community at large, which often has unrealistic expectations of bilingualism and do not recognise the work involved in bilingual childrearing (De Houwer, 2009b; King and Fogle, cited in Patterson, 2002). Bilingual parents are not necessarily better informed than the general public about bilingualism and may believe some of the myths of bilingualism. The research that filters into the popular press tends to be superficial or inaccurate (King and Fogle, 2006a). Additionally, bilingual parents who came from a monolingual background may transfer their own difficulties in coping with a new language environment (Baetens Breadmore, 1986) although their language acquisition might have been different from their children's. In the Western world, parents' beliefs on bilingualism are sometimes very strong (De Houwer, 1999) and parents tend to feel very responsible for their children's bilingual development as opposed to other societies in the non-Western world, which think that children acquire languages directly from their multilingual environments. Parents in the western world, who put a lot of effort into their children's bilingualism, may expect their children to naturally change into perfectly balanced bilinguals and this might result in both parental disappointment and children's sense of failure (Piller, 2001).

De Houwer (1999b) shows that parents' beliefs about children's language acquisition and their attitudes to particular styles of language use or linguistic varieties and particular languages play a determining role in the early active development of bilingualism (*ibid.* p.85). Bilingual parents often lack information about bilingual development stages, the importance of input, as well as the challenges of raising bilingual

children. Only a few parents acknowledge the consistency and effort that is needed to support (additive) bilingualism or seemed to be aware of the challenges of their children entering their school years (King and Fogle, 2006, p.707). This may affect parents' expectations and interactions with their children. Parents often misjudge how more successful other parents are because they are often unaware of how frequently children raised in bilingual families become active users of only one language (De Houwer, 2009b). Parents may try to control their children's language behaviour by punishing the children for using the wrong language, for example, which has a negative impact on the development of early active bilingualism (ibid.).

Parents also have to manage their bilingual children's changing identities. Their children may go through identity stages in which they are questioning the need to speak a second language. For Bialystok (2001), bilingualism carries a psychosocial dimension that can itself profoundly affect children because the language individual speak is instrumental in forming their identities and being required to speak a language that is not totally natural may interfere with the children's construction of self. Children may rebel and refuse to speak a second language in front of their peers in order not to be exposed as different as was reported by some participants in my data. However, there are cases in which children refuse to speak a language long-term and this may affect the relation between parent and children. Studies of adolescents from immigrant families in the United States found that:

Adolescents who conversed with their parents in different languages felt more emotionally distant from them and were less likely to engage in discussions with them than were youths who shared the same language with their parents. (Tseng and Fuligni, 2000, p.473)

Ultimately, bilingual children may understand very little of one of their languages (Shin 2005; Wong Fillmore 1991). When they grow up, some children may regret not to be able to "communicate with some members of their extended families, and not being able to function in the country where the language is being used" (De Houwer 2009, p 311; Rosen, 2012).

Childhood professionals such as teachers, doctors, or speech therapists also lack knowledge of bilingualism. Parents are often wrongly advised to stop speaking one of their languages (De Houwer, 2009b) although there is no evidence that bilingualism may lead to delay or disorders in language acquisition or that dropping a language may benefit the other language. On the contrary, the sudden drop of a language may lead to emotional and psychological difficulties both for the parents and the children because languages are strongly linked to emotions as well as identities. This is amply documented in narratives

such as Rodriguez' (1982) who documented his upbringing in a Mexican immigrant family in the USA. His family was advised to speak English at home although the parents were not proficient in that language. This type of advice tends to exacerbate bilingual parents' insecurity (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). For De Houwer (2006; 2009b; 2013), not speaking the same language as your parents endangers the harmonious bilingual development of bilingualism and may affect the quality of the parent-child relationship. For the author (2009b, p.326), non-harmonious bilingual development may even cause:

insecure emotional attachment between children and parent, extreme feelings of sibling rivalry, difficulties in forming early friendships, disadvantage in educational settings, non-acceptance by family members, feelings of inadequacy, depression, and many more negative socio-psychological events.

For Pavlenko (2004) and Yamamoto (2005), talking to their children in a second language may create an "emotional distance" between parents and children. De Houwer (2009b) points out that if children do not speak one of their parents' languages they may lose contact with a part of their family. And surveys of adolescents from immigrant families in the USA show that adolescents who speak with their parents in a different language feel more emotionally distant from them. They are less likely to engage in discussion with them than youths who share the same language with their parents (Tseng and Fuligni, 2000, cited in De Houwer, 2009b, p.311). For Lightbown and Spada (2006), using their first language in the family environment enable parents to maintain their self-esteem. This is particularly true if they are struggling with their new language outside the home.

To sum up, parenting bilingual children can be quite complex and taxing emotionally because it involves a mix of rational and emotional elements. On the one hand, bilingual parents support transmitting heritage languages that they view as social capital. However, they may compare themselves to other bilingual parents and may experience the feeling of failure if they fail to transmit the heritage language. On the other hand, they may also worry about their children having two languages and thus not fully belonging to the heritage language community. Parents' worries are reinforced by a general lack of support and information in society in general. Myths about bilingualism and parents' own biases may encourage parents to adopt strategies such as dropping the heritage language. Children themselves also have agency and may rebel against using the heritage language.

## 4.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented some aspects of bilingualism discussed in the literature of psychology, sociology, second language acquisition and bilingualism, and brought some ideas together, to help me understand how my participants may experience the emotional impact of familial bilingualism.

I first looked at the definitions of emotions and at the difference between the language of emotion and emotion words. I tried to ascertain how emotion is defined in the literature and found out that like bilingualism and identity, emotion is a concept that is very difficult to define. Psychologists, linguists and sociologists have different views of what constitutes emotion. However, most scholars argue that there is a strong link between language and emotions because emotions are processed through language (Barret et al., 2007; Pavlenko, 2008). For the purpose of his study on bilingualism, I have chosen to retain definitions from linguistics, psychology and sociology that establish a link between emotions and patterns of relationships as I agree with Burkitt (2014) and Hamers and Blanc (1989) that emotions are not experienced on their own but through social interactions.

To be able to express emotions through language, bilinguals need to be able to lexicalize their emotions in more than one language and acquire the vocabulary of emotion in their two languages (Dewaele, 2006; 2010). The literature shows that the vocabulary of emotion is not necessarily universal. There are a number of studies of the language of emotions in different languages that show that the vocabulary of emotion is culturally constructed (Wierzbicka, 1999a; 1999b).

To express emotions, bilinguals can choose one or the other of their two languages or code-switch. Some bilinguals use their first language because they consider it to be their emotional language because of its link to childhood (Schrauf and Durazo-Arvizu, 2006). Other bilinguals use their second language because they have become dominant in that language or it enables them to take some distance (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Marian and Kaushanskaya, 2008; Dewaele and Pavlenko, 2002; Pavlenko, 2006; Kramersch, 2007, 2009). There is a number of studies that highlight the role of culture, age and age of migration in the choice of languages and expression of emotions of bilinguals (Schrauf and Sanchez, 2004; Marian and Kaushanskaya, 2008).

Raising children bilingually can be a very complex emotional experience for families. Bilingual parents have to deal with being seen as foreign and speaking in another language (Kramersch, 2006). As adult second language learners, they may experience language phenomena such as fossilisation and attrition, foreign accent and code-

switching that may mark them as different and make them feel different, including incompetent, and emotional (Berry, 1990; 1997; Köpke et al., 2007; Pavlenko, 2008; De Houwer, 2009; Kristeva, 2014). As a result, the experience of speaking another language can be experienced as tiring by some second language learners (Bialystok, 2015; Kramsch, 2006). Bilingual parents have to make a choice as to which language to use with their children. In addition, they have an extra responsibility to transmit a language skill that is valued by society as a form of social capital (Burkitt, 2014; Kristeva, 1988, 2004; Piller, 2001; 2013; De Houwer, 2009b). However, they may feel isolated in society because there is often a lack of support for bilingual families (King and Fogle, 2006a).

Bilingual parents also have to accept that they cannot control their children's choices of languages since they may vary depending on life circumstances. Fortunately, it might not matter too much what languages are spoken to the children as emotional languages are not fixed and bilinguals are capable of expressing emotions in their two languages.

Children are very dependent on the language planning of their families. The attitudes of the families also play an important part in the children's language acquisition. The families' attitudes are complex because they include a mix of socio-economic factors and personal experiences on language acquisition and use.

Emotion and the expression of emotions in several languages are key concepts of the literature of emotion and bilingualism that are taken up in the data analysis. The emotional experience of the bilingual participants as a whole as well as the emotions related to language transmission are taken up in chapter six while chapter eight is dedicated to the emotional impact of living in a bilingual family.

In the next chapter, I present the methodology I adopted in this study.

## **Chapter five**

### **Methodology**

In reality, there is no way to examine texts “from nowhere in particular” and it is hard to imagine that an analyst can truly “step outside of himself or herself” (Santana 1999: 28) to create objective interpretations (Pavlenko, 2007, p.167).

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This study is about experiences of familial bilingualism and the questions of the study centre on how my participants experienced familial bilingualism in their everyday lives. In the study, I was interested in finding out how my participants perceived familial bilingualism; the challenges and issues that familial bilingualism raised as well as the emotional impact that it had on the participants. I chose to conduct a qualitative study in which I collected narrative data through unstructured interviews. I then undertook an interpretative data analysis of how the participants seemed to interpret their experiences of familial bilingualism.

In this chapter, I first present some epistemological perspectives. Next, I examine some of the methodological issues I faced in the research related to positioning myself, interpreting the data and dealing with ethical issues. Then, I proceed to describe my methodology from the collection of data to the analysis and writing of the analysis. To finish, I provide some background information on the participants to facilitate a better comprehension of the subsequent three data chapters.

#### **5.2. Epistemological perspectives**

My research on familial bilingualism is exploratory in nature. It contains variables that are hard to define. In order to conduct the research, I studied different paradigms of qualitative research in order to find the best methodology to study the phenomenon of familial bilingualism (Creswell, 2008). I looked at examples of qualitative research that included the study of personal experiences. These examples included “common and problematic moments and their meanings in the lives of individuals” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2). They showed the interpretative nature of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, 2000; Mason, 1996; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Creswell, 2008) and dealt with “the ways in which the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced and

produced” (Mason, 1996, p.4). My readings on qualitative research supported the legitimacy of interpretative qualitative research and the credibility of qualitative data.

In my readings, I learned that qualitative researchers are interpreters who try to “make sense or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning that people give them” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2). Qualitative researchers are encouraged to construct “a complex and holistic picture by presenting detailed perspectives of the participants through their voices” (Creswell, 1998, p.15). I also learned that qualitative researchers are not experts who evaluate their participants but instead learn actively from them (ibid.). For qualitative researchers, “knowledge is created by the exchange between researcher and participants and it is thus an interactive process” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p.2, 7-8). Pavlenko (2002, p.214) shows the importance of the co-constructed nature of narrative in qualitative research when she says that:

Recent research convincingly demonstrates that narratives are not purely individual productions – they are powerfully shaped by social, cultural, and historical conventions as well as by the relationship between the storyteller and the interlocutor (whether an interviewer, a researcher, a friend, or an imaginary reader).

Researchers and participants make and express meanings in a narrative form (Mishler, 1986). Through the telling of stories, researchers and participants learn a lot about themselves from each other and the world they live in (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2010).

In order to discover the worldviews of the participants, qualitative researchers have to get as close as possible to the participants (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). They have to be able to connect with them cognitively and emotionally to understand their views. This enables researchers to experience the world in a similar way to that of the participants (Rager, 2005, p.424). Thus, qualitative research can affect researchers, especially in cases of "sensitive investigations" (Cutcliffe, 2003, p.141; West, 1996). It can also transform researchers (Gilgun, 2005, p.260). West (1996) recounts his attempts to bridge a socio-cultural gap between him and a marginalized Indian woman he interviewed, as there seemed to be such a socio-cultural gap between them. West managed the task by using his interviewing skills, his exchanges with the participant and co-researcher as well as much soul-searching reflection. As an advocate of the use of narratives and biographical methods in social research (Merrill and West, 2009), West willingly shares autobiographical material (1996; 2006). He records his uncertainties about his identity as a researcher with his participants and his readers. However, the human factor, which is a great strength of qualitative research, may become a weakness. In effect, researchers have

a great responsibility to their participants because they are “the instrument through which the data are collected and analysed” (Patton, 2002, p.276). Researchers have to reflect on their own research process and present their analytical processes and procedures as completely and truthfully as possible.

In their findings, qualitative researchers have to try to reveal what is distinctive about the cases they are examining and be careful not to generalize. As Sacks (2011, p.110) puts it:

We have each of us, a life-story, an inner narrative—whose continuity, whose sense, is our lives. It might be said that each of us constructs and lives, a ‘narrative’, and that this narrative is us, our identities. If we wish to know about a man, we ask ‘what is his story—his real, innermost story?’—for each of us is a biography, a story. Each of us is a singular narrative, which is constructed, continually, unconsciously, by, through, and in us—through our perceptions, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions; and, not least, our discourse, our spoken narrations. Biologically, physiologically, we are not so different from each other; historically, as narratives—we are each of us unique.

However, some researchers, like Stake (1978), argue that good generalization can help understand general conditions although it may lead to studying phenomena too simplistically. In order to reveal what is distinctive and thus particularize findings, qualitative researchers have to try to understand the complexity, detail and context of their research (Mason, 1996, p.4). For Crotty (1998), the interpretation of the data should be “culturally derived and historically situated” (ibid. p.67) because our understanding is always from the point of view of a particular point in history (Dostal, 2002). To construct local and specific realities it is thus necessary to take into account historical values (Guba and Lincoln, in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, pp.111-112). The geography, location of work, the physical environment of the participants can be significant. In this study, the families lived in the South of England in a location where they were easily in contact with France and where other French families were residing. In addition, social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values have to be taken into account to conduct qualitative research.

As my research was about the experiences of familial bilingualism of a small group of French and Spanish-English bilinguals, I had to reflect on what constitutes experiences and how experiences should be studied. As the experiences, I was interested in, were about being bilingual and language, they seemed existentialist in nature. This led me to look at some existential and hermeneutical ideas developed by thinkers such as Husserl and Heidegger who study experience and the self. In turn, this led me to look at phenomenology, which Smith et al. (2009, p.11) describes as a:



Philosophical approach to the study of experience. There are many different emphases and interests amongst phenomenologists, but there all tended to share a particular interest in thinking about what the experience of being human is like, in all of its various aspects, but especially in terms of the things which matter to us, and which constitute our lived world.

Based on my readings, the methodology I used in this research ended up being a mixture of elements of grounded theory and phenomenology (Creswell, 1998; Smith et al., 2009) because both research methods have been used to investigate phenomena of social sciences, including phenomena of interest in applied linguistics. Both methods “focus on the richness of the human experience and seek to understand a situation from the subject’s point of view through interviews in a flexible way” (Baker et al., 1992, p.1355). However, the methods differ in the quantity of interviews required. Grounded theory, which is often used in sociology, requires a larger number of interviews because researchers seek to build a theory to cover the diversity of the experiences by “saturating categories during the analysis of data” (Creswell, 1998, p.65). On the other hand, phenomenology, which is commonly used in psychology does not aim at building a theory and requires a smaller number of interviews. Instead, it aims at conceptualizing the common essence of the experience. This fitted better with my epistemology and the scope of the PhD. Grounded theory, also requires iterating multi-source and multi-site data collection and analysis to generate concepts, which are time-consuming, while phenomenology can be based on the interpretation of the interviews (Baker et al., 1992). Phenomenology enabled me to select my participants because of their experience of familial bilingualism rather than because of their membership in a given population. However, I used grounded theory to take a flexible approach to interviewing, collecting and analysing further data because in grounded theory data analysis processes are not predetermined but structured as the research proceeds (Corbin and Holt, 2005).

As I am examining the individual experiences of my participants, my research cannot be generalized to a bigger population of bilingual families. Instead, I aim to share some elements of the experiences of my participants with other researchers to inform the research on bilingual families.

### **5.3. Methodological issues**

#### **5.3.1. Positioning myself in the research**

As described in Chapter one, I had a personal interest in the topic of the research because of my own experiences of familial bilingualism. What interested me in familial bilingualism was the complexity of the phenomenon and the emotionality of the topic. I

wanted to look at what it meant for other families to be bilingual and how the participants perceived and experienced subjectively what was happening to them and around them. I had noted the lack of public information on the emotional aspects of familial bilingualism. My initial readings confirmed that the study of emotions and bilingualism was in fact relatively recent and that few findings were actually filtering down to the public (Pavlenko, 2008).

My initial interactions with bilingual parents and my readings of language memoirs made me reflect on how to position myself in the research and how to use my own experiences of bilingualism. I encountered issues of participation, subjectivity and voice. Initially, I contemplated becoming a participant in the research. In the field of bilingualism, most researchers have a personal interest in familial bilingualism. They are either bilinguals or parents of bilingual children (Grosjean, 1982; Beatens Beardsmore, 1986; Wierzbicka, 1986; 1999a; Hamers and Blanc, 1989; Romaine, 1995; Dewaele, 2010; Cenoz, 2009; De Houwer, 2009b; Pavlenko, 2005; etc.). Pavlenko (2003, p.178) for example, uses her own experiences in her research and makes a case for the use of personal experiences arguing that it can empower the researcher:

whereas for some aspiring researchers it can be a source of disempowerment, for others, myself included, being a refugee, an immigrant, and a female is a privilege and an ultimate source of strength, critical consciousness, and multiple perspectives.

Like the author, I strongly feel that personal experiences can enrich the research by contributing to multiple perspectives. I also believe that “writing about human beings should weave together the personal and the researcherly, the subjective and the objective” (Pavlenko, 2008, p.xi). This is supported by Wright Mills (1959, p.216) who said:

You must learn to use your life experience in your intellectual work: continually to examine and interpret it. In this sense, craftsmanship is the centre of yourself and you are personally involved in every intellectual product upon which you may work.

For some thinkers, like Hannah Arendt, it is, in fact, impossible to think without personal experience, as everything is a rethinking of things (1964, cited in Birules, 2012). However, although personal experience can be an important motivator for starting a research and may lead to more empathy while conducting the research, I initially found it hard to distance myself from my own experiences. I found myself in Bourdieu’s (2009) conundrum:

Often my personal experience makes me aware of things that others would not see. The problem is to know how to work with one's own experience to make something out of it.

I took inspiration from Etherington (2004, pp.31-32) to learn how to achieve reflexivity by understanding how my own experiences and context influenced my research:

Reflexivity is the capacity of the researchers to acknowledge how their own experience and contexts (which might be fluid and changing) inform the process and outcomes of inquiry. If we can be aware of how our own thoughts, feelings, culture, environment and social and personal history inform us as we dialogue with participants, transcribe their conversation with us and write our representation of the work, then perhaps we can come close to the rigour that is required of good qualitative research. Rigour not truth!

In the end, I decided not to use my own experiences directly for several reasons. First, it would have been difficult to guarantee my children's privacy. Second, using my own experiences might affect me emotionally and thus be distracting for me as a researcher. Instead, I decided to disclose some personal information in the introduction to clarify my position and reveal my biases.

Using my own experiences might also have led me to generalise my own experiences and be too partial in the treatment of the data. I struggled with the issue of subjectivity. However, reflecting on my own experiences at the beginning of the interview stage helped me to correct some of my initial biases on familial bilingualism. It enabled me to choose my participants in a more flexible way. I realised that I had been too absorbed by my own experiences of familial bilingualism and that as a result I was inclined to choose participants who were most similar to me. I had to try to deal with my personal experiences more appropriately and not try to impress the reader with my "own credentials" as recommended by Rubin and Rubin (1995, p.91). I also had to reflect on how my gender/social class/ethnicity/culture influenced me as an individual and a researcher and accept that my participants would have different experiences of familial bilingualism and different perceptions of their experiences and that it is their experiences that would "give legitimacy to the argument" (ibid. p.91).

Another related methodological issue was to find the voices of the research, mine as well as my participants' which is an issue much debated by post-feminist authors (Richardson, 1997; Houtt, 2011). It was very difficult for me to find my voice in the research while at the same time giving a voice to my participants with whom I shared similar experiences. I tried to yield Rubin and Rubin's (1995) advice and endeavour to listen and hear the participants. The hearing is supposed to humanise both the researcher

and the participants. It is supposed to empower the participants (ibid.). Narrative analysis theorists talk about the need to account for the voice of the theoretical framework (Lieblich et al., 1998). This voice was a real issue for me. Some phenomenological perspectives instruct researchers not to get too acquainted with the literature before the interview stage and analysis process so as not to be influenced by existing knowledge. This is supposed to help researchers to suspend judgement (phenomenological bracketing) and thus better focus on the analysis of the experience although it does not necessarily mean having no subject knowledge prior to data collection. In interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) for example, researchers can have their own views when they analyse the data provided that they identify them and keep them apart from the participants' views.

The basic idea in understanding the experiences characteristic of the individuals participating in a study is that the researcher moves beyond his or her own assumptions and views. Concerning the authenticity and ethics of the research, it is of crucial importance that the researcher should identify and describe his or her own view in every phase of the research process. The identification of this view allows the researcher to meet the participants as individual human beings and enables him or her to respect the participants' individual expressions of the research subject. The participants enrich the researcher's view and make it possible to obtain new understanding of the research topic. (Haggman-Laitila, 1999)

I acquired my theoretical framework painstakingly by fits and starts through reading intensively through the whole research process. I felt that the research was taking over my life but unlike Wright Mills' (1959) researcher, I felt a strong urge to study all manner of topics related to my research.

You do not really have to study a topic you are working on; for as I have said, once you are into it, it is everywhere. You are sensitive to its themes; you see and hear them everywhere in your experience, especially, it always seems to me, in apparently unrelated areas. (ibid. p.232)

I read all through the research to try to understand the data, and how it fitted with the literature. Consequently, I found it hard to contain the research because familial bilingualism is multidisciplinary and my readings took me to a multitude of fields such as philosophy, psychology, emotion and sociology, cognitive neuroscience, cultural psychology, etc.

As a part-time PhD student, I spent a long time working on the research. This enabled me to become progressively detached from my own experiences of familial bilingualism and more open to hearing what the participants had to say about their different experiences. I also lived a long time with the data in the form of interviews going

back and forth to the interviews and trying to see how my data fitted with what the literature was telling me. To develop some reflexivity, I used personal notes on the interviews, excerpts from language memoirs, and continue to study different aspects of the topic.

### **5.3.2. Using narratives in the research**

Qualitative researchers do not normally rely on a single source of data. They tend to gather multiple forms of data, which can be interviews, observations, or other documents such as narratives. The use of narrative is common in qualitative research on bilingualism (Chase, 2005; 2011). Researchers like Pavlenko (2002, p.213) have recognised the legitimacy of narrative data and support the view that:

Narratives collected from learners, as well as published language memoirs, are a legitimate source of data in the interpretative tradition, and complementary to more traditional empirical approaches” (Kanno, 2000a, 2000b, Kouritzin, 1999, 2000; McMahill, 2001; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 1998, 2001a, 2001b, Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000, Schumann, 1997).

Today, we seem to be living in an age in which “we are all biographers now and want to tell our stories” (Merrill and West, 2009, p.1).

When I started the research, I read some doctoral theses on bilingualism, which contained extracts from bilingual writers who share their personal reflections on being bilingual. For example, I read Burck’s (2003) study on the use of language in the family therapy of bilingual patients in which the author uses data from five language memoirs including Hoffman’s (1989). I also read El-Khattabi’s (2012) study of exile, language and generations in which the author uses data from Huston and Sebbar’s memoir (1986). If on one hand, these readings were relevant to learn how to use published narratives, on the other hand, they drew me irresistibly toward the genre and I ended up reading a disproportionate amount of language narratives. I became very interested in the fields of history, sociology, and psychology, which draw heavily on personal stories and position bilinguals in society.

The reading of language narratives presented me with the dilemma of whether to use narrative memoirs as a direct source of data along the narrative data that I would collect from the participants. For example, I was very interested in including the data from Huston and Sebbar’s (1986) book in which the authors exchange their views on their experiences of being bilingual and raising bilingual children. I also contemplated using a BBC radio programme, “Losing your parents’ language” (Rosen, 24/04/12) in which the participants in the programme talk about the emotional impact of familial bilingualism.

After much consideration, though, I decided not to use extra sources of data in the research for two reasons. First, I found that the narratives, which focus on identity, culture, emotions and exile were rather unsettling at a personal level and thus might challenge my subjectivity. Second, from a methodological point of view, it was difficult to use data that I had not collected and that was in the form of narratives. For Kramsch (2006), studying narrative “represent a challenge to traditional to SLA research, as they require tools of analysis that straddle the humanities and the social sciences” (p.100). Lastly, the contexts and languages of the written narratives were rather different. In the study, I first examined the participants’ narratives in the interviews using grounded theory analysis as commented in the previous section.

## **5.4. Dealing with interviews ethically**

### **5.4.1. Interviewing adults**

To interview my participants, I followed the ethics policy guidelines of my university on research that involves participants. The university’s ethics committee approved the research, which was then conducted according to its guidelines. In line with the guidelines, I explained the research to the participants. I requested them to sign an informed consent form that described the purpose of the research and informed them of their rights to withdraw at any time. There is a copy of the consent form in Appendix 1 (p.231).

When I explained the research to the participants, I tried to be as open as I could about the topic of the study. At first, the study was entitled “An exploration of the relationships between parents and children in bilingual family settings with respect to the linguistic, social and emotional aspects of children’s developing bilingualism” This title appeared in the consent form and required so much explaining that I was worried it might affect the direction of the interviews. I subsequently changed the title to “Ordinary” bilingualism: a study of French and Spanish bilingual families in Kent” which was easier to explain and would enable the participants to talk more freely about their experiences. This title was eventually changed to “Experiences of being bilingual: seven French and Spanish-speaking families in Kent”.

The participants were asked to give permission to be recorded and were informed that the recordings could be stopped at any time. This was stipulated in the form they had to sign and which is provided in Appendix 1. I was aware that talking about their families could affect the participants emotionally. I tried to minimise the risks by using open questions and letting the participants determine the boundaries of what they wanted to tell

me about their family lives. During the interviews, I tried to keep in mind that I may need to protect the participants from introspection. For example, when Cristina, one of the participants, explained that she did not think she fitted in either her original country or England and concluded: “This is becoming very soul searching” (Cristina, 2012, l. 272), I felt that the interview might have gone beyond what was ethically acceptable. I offered to stop the interview. However, my participant chose to continue. I support Kvale’s (1996) concept of the interview as an exchange of views (“inter View”) that should result in a positive experience for the participants. I also support De Vault’s view that researchers should seek to “minimize harm and control” (De Vault, 1996, p.33). However, as an inexperienced interviewer, I found it hard to put these concepts into practice. I tried to learn from each interview to improve my interviewing skills (Silverman, 2007).

When I started to work on the interviews, I gave each participant a pseudonym and changed the names of the locations the participants referred to in order to guarantee the participants’ confidentiality. This was important because the participants lived in small towns and worked in public places. The interviews were kept safe on my personal computer at home where no one else could access them until I could dispose of them.

I offered to show the transcripts of the interviews to the participants, as theoretically, I believed that the participants are the true owners of the data collected as they had co-constructed the account I was subjectively writing (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The participants did not ask to see the transcripts. One of my concerns nonetheless was how to manage contact with the participants to keep them informed of the progress of the study or ask them follow-up questions. I found this part of the research very difficult, as I was worried about bothering the participants because they had already given me a lot of time. However, I met some of the participants informally during the process of research and I updated them on the research.

#### **5.4.2. Interviewing children**

The decision not to interview children might seem contradictory in research on familial bilingualism. Interviewing children is very different from interviewing adults because “children think differently from adults and there are qualitative differences in the way children of different ages understand the world around them” (Greig and Taylor, 2007, p.31). Interviewing children requires different skills. With young children, for example, the researcher might have to use extra resources such as drawings or narratives, which require a lot of preparation. In July 2011, I informally interviewed my own daughters, aged 11 and 13. I found the task difficult and the interviews rather disappointing because my daughters had very little to say about bilingualism. It seemed

that for children like mine, the situation of living with a foreign parent is rather ordinary and that they do not have much to say about it apart from providing anecdotal evidence that may not be that valuable for the research. This made me reflect on the issue of managing biases when interviewing relatives or friends.

I was aware that the ethical protocol for interviewing children is complicated and extensive. It would have created difficulties methodologically as I wanted to keep the interviews as informal - and thus unscripted - as possible to enable me to follow new leads. If I had asked for ethical clearance to interview children, I would have had to script the interviews and the script would have had to be approved beforehand by the Ethical Committee. As I had reservations about the contribution of young children to this research, I decided to interview young adults only. I also hoped that the young adults would be able to reflect on their whole upbringing and evaluate their whole experience as children and teenagers as well as young adults and thus provide data on how bilingualism played a part in their development and in their relationships with their parents.

## **5.5. Description of the methodology**

### **5.6. The participants**

In this research, I kept the group of participants deliberately small and flexible from the start for the sake of feasibility. Inspired by grounded theory, I wanted to conduct long unstructured interviews to collect rich data from the participants and continue until I had reached some kind of data saturation. The group of participants evolved with the research but remained small.

My first interview with Isabelle, which was opportunist, made me realise that any bilingual parent has much to say about familial bilingualism. Consequently, I become more flexible about the profile of the participants I recruited. I also decided not to set a time limit for the interview process, which ended up lasting three years. I just tried to interview participants who could add new perspectives to the data I was collecting. For example, the interview with Isabelle made me aware that some parents have experiences of childhood bilingualism and that this can add another dimension to the understanding of familial bilingualism. I interviewed three participants with experiences of childhood bilingualism. They are listed as both parents and children in Table 1 (page 94). A lot of research on familial bilingualism focuses on children's language acquisition. However, I believe that to include the past and present bilingual experiences of the parents can enrich the research as it provides a richer contextual background for the families. In addition, participants who are interviewed in the research on familial bilingualism are often



mothers and I reflected that the perspectives of fathers might enrich the data. This is the reason why I conducted two late interviews with two fathers.

### **5.6.1. Defining the recruitment criteria**

My choice of participants was based on several criteria. First, it was important that the participants were willing to share their experiences and represented a range of points of views on familial bilingualism. They had to have an experience of familial bilingualism. Second, considering the multiplicity of definitions of bilingualism, I had to keep an open mind on what constituted bilingualism for the families I interviewed. At first, I had planned to interview families who might struggle to define themselves as bilingual families if the parents had not managed to transmit their languages. Naively, I thought that such families might have more to say in terms of identity and emotions. However, in practice, I soon realised that this was not necessarily the case and that all the families whatever their bilingualism had much to say on a wide range of themes including emotions.

Third, I sought to recruit participants who like me spoke French or Spanish. I believed that I would be better able to conduct the interviews and analysed the data in those languages. Although I was not planning to do a discourse analysis, I believed I would be better able to understand the participants including their paralinguistic or non-lexical communication. Paralinguistic is composed of intonation, pitch and speed of speaking, hesitation noises, gestures, and facial expressions, which are different from one language to another. Paralinguistic is important because it may modify meanings and convey emotions (Gumperz, 1982).

I thought that having a good knowledge of the historical contexts of the lives of the participants, as well as having shared some of their cultural experiences, would help me in the research. Theoretically, language is supposed to determine the worldviews of particular cultures although today our “cultures are no longer homogenous” and “speakers of the same language may find themselves separated by deep cultural gaps while others who speak distinct languages share the same culture” (Gumperz and Levison, 1996, pp.376-77). Therefore, I was aware that “shared understanding” cannot be taken for granted. However, I believe that culture may influence our worldviews. In France, for example, the Republican values vehicled by the French language are very strong and easily recognised by its members (Berry, 1990). These values are acquired in school together with the French language. At the same time, I believe that researchers have to guard against oversimplifying the relationship between language and cultural variability (Holliday et al., 2004, p.75).

In this research, I felt that having a common knowledge of the languages and cultures of the participants would facilitate my interactions with the participants. For example, I could understand the implications of the prohibition of a regional language, like Galician, during the Spanish dictatorship. I could also understand instances of code-switching during the interviews. Code-switching is an important linguistic resource for bilinguals which fulfils affective functions (Hymes 1975, cited in Haggège 1996; Blom and Gumperz, 2000; Grosjean, 2001; 2011; Pavlenko, 2005; Li Wei, 2008; Cook and Bassetti, 2010).

My background, family and professional life were similar to those of the participants in one aspect or another.

### **5.6.2. Recruiting the participants**

The participants were recruited locally through personal and social contacts. I found that bilingualism is quite a popular topic and talking informally about the study generated a lot of interest around me. Friends and acquaintances offered to introduce me to other bilingual families. I also met some of the participants during events about bilingualism. In addition, some of the families I interviewed suggested that I interview their adult children. Ideally, it would have been interesting to interview several members of each family but this was a bit difficult to organise because some adult children had moved to different towns or countries. Some parents had separated and lived in different countries.

Somehow, the group of participants ended up being rather homogenous, as it was mostly composed of middle-aged professionals with a personal interest in familial bilingualism and their adult children. Some participants were familiar with academic research and they had reflected on their experiences before the interviews. As a result, they responded well to the unstructured format of the interview. Most participants welcomed the chance to talk about their experiences of familial bilingualism. Some participants were indeed very talkative. I found that the participants often had different perspectives from mine, which was thought provoking. I also found that follow-up interviews and interviews with other family members were helpful to produce a richer description of the phenomenon of familial bilingualism.

I was more comfortable interviewing people I did not know. I found that interviewing participants I knew well was uncomfortable because I was too close to their experiences. It made me reflect on my position as a researcher, the issue of disclosure of personal information and the reliability of the data. I decided that as I was researching how the participants perceived their experiences of familial bilingualism, the answers of

the participants had to be valid since they reflected the way that the participants perceived their experiences at the time of the interview. For some researchers, the representation of events in narratives means a constant change of “truth of being” (Heikkinen et al., 2000). And as “any narrative encompasses multiple truths” (Josselson, 2007, p.64), truth or reality is always partial and “all that is available are interpretations of a reality which are fluid and hybrid” (Eisner, 1997, p.8).

The topic of familial bilingualism is a very personal topic. It is about parenting which is a very sensitive topic for parents (Copland and White, 1991). I had to reflect on how the research might affect the parents’ parental identities, considering that there seems to be a consensus among the public that raising children bilingually in French or Spanish is a good thing.

### **5.6.3. Presentation of participants**

#### **5.6.3.1. Isabelle (interviews conducted in French).**

Isabelle is a French mother who is married to Andie, a British man. She has raised three bilingual children, including Sophie, 18 (10), whom I also interviewed. Isabelle is educated at college level and at the time of the interview was working as a teacher. She was also helping her husband manage a restaurant. Isabelle had learned English, German, Spanish and Italian in a secondary school in France. In her childhood, she had also learned Farsi. She had lived most of her adult life in English-speaking countries since getting married. My first interview with Isabelle was conducted on campus. I conducted a second interview with Isabelle because I got interested in generational bilingualism. I wanted to know more about her experiences of childhood bilingualism. My second interview with Isabelle took place in the family restaurant and I was happy when Isabelle suggested that I could interview her youngest daughter, Sophie (18).

#### **5.6.3.2. Andrea (Interview conducted in English)**

Andrea is a Mexican mother who is married to Mike (3) a British man. She has raised three bilingual children, including Manu, 20 (9) who I also interviewed. Andrea is educated at college level. At the time of the interview, she was working in public relations. Andrea had learned English in a secondary school. My interview with Andrea took place in the family home. I conducted short interviews with Andrea, Mike and Manu whom incidentally I already knew. On that day, the family had some unexpected visitors, which resulted in the interviews being shorter than I had planned. I did not reschedule another series of interviews because I decided not to interview participants I was friends with.

#### **5.6.3.3. Mike (interview conducted in English)**

Mike is a British father who is married to Andrea (2), a Mexican woman. He has raised three bilingual children, including Manu, 20 (9) whom I also interviewed. Mike is educated at college level. At the time of the interview, Mike was a sales manager for a big company. Mike had a very good knowledge of Spanish having spent long periods in Mexico. However, he only spoke Spanish in Mexico. My interview with Mike took place in the family home on the same day as I interviewed Andrea and Manu.

#### **5.6.3.4. Cristina (interview conducted in English)**

Cristina is a Spanish mother who is married to Steve, a British man. She is raising a bilingual child, Tommy, aged about 2. She is educated at college level. At the time of the interview, Cristina was working as a lecturer. Cristina had learned English in secondary school in Spain and later completed her studies in England in another subject. Cristina was introduced to me by an acquaintance and I interviewed her in her office.

#### **5.6.3.5. Julie (interview conducted in English)**

Julie is an English mother who is divorced from Ramiro, a Venezuela man. She had raised two bilingual children, a son, Sam and a daughter, Laura. Her son was in Venezuela and her daughter was in England at the time when the interview with Julie took place. She was educated at college level. At the time of the interview, Julie was a lecturer. Julie had learned Spanish when she moved to Venezuela after her marriage. I interviewed Julie in her office having met her by chance a year before.

#### **5.6.3.6. Alain (interviews conducted in French and English)**

Alain is a French father who is married to a British wife. He has raised a bilingual child, Laurie (11) who is in her thirties. I briefly talked to her during the interview with her father. Alain was not college educated. He had done a vocational course in France and at the time of the interview was working in catering. Alain learned English in situ in England. I interviewed Alain in his place of work having being told of him by another participant to whom I had said that I was looking for some fathers to complete the data.

#### **5.6.3.7. Marc (interview conducted in French)**

Marc is a French father, who is half-Spanish and is married to Anne, a British woman who is half-French. I briefly talked to her during my interview with Mark. They

have been raising two bilingual children, Emma aged 5, and Hadrien aged 8. Marc is educated at college level and at the time of the interview was working in catering. Mark had learned several languages, in a secondary school in France (Spanish, English) and as an adult (Italian, Portuguese and Greek). I interviewed Marc in his place of work.

#### **5.6.3.8. Linda (interview conducted in English)**

Linda is an English mother, who is divorced from her British husband with whom she had started raising Amy, their now adult bilingual child, in France. Linda is educated at college level. At the time of the interview, she was working as a therapist. Linda started learning French in a secondary school and went on studying the language in France both informally and formally. My interview with Linda took place on the campus having met her by chance on the same campus.

#### **5.6.3.9. Manu (interview conducted in English)**

Manu is the son of a Mexican mother, Andrea (2) and a British father, Mike (3) and has two bilingual siblings. Manu acquired Spanish from birth. He also studied it in secondary school and at college. At the time of the interview, Manu was a student. He was contemplating becoming a teacher. My interview with Manu took place in the family home on the same day as I interviewed Andrea and Mike.

#### **5.6.3.10. Sophie (interview conducted in French)**

Sophie is the daughter of a French mother, Isabelle (1) and an English father, Andie. Sophie acquired French from birth. She also studied it in secondary school. She was about to start university and was planning to continue French at a college level. My interview with Sophie took place in the family restaurant. She was the third generation of her family to experience familial bilingualism.

#### **5.6.3.11. Laurie (interview conducted in English)**

Laurie is the daughter of a French father, Alain (6) and an English mother. Laurie was working part-time in catering. She admitted not being very fluent in French. I briefly talked to Laurie when I interviewed her father but retain her data, with her permission, because contrary to the other children of bilingual participants that I interviewed, Laurie seemed a reluctant bilingual.

## 5.7. The interviews

Over three years, I conducted a series of unstructured interviews, which are interviews that enable the participants to describe their lived world from their own perspectives (Creswell, 2008). I chose this type of interview, which is the type of interviews closest to conversation, because I wanted the participants to feel comfortable to share their experiences. I suggested to the participants that they chose the locations of the interviews and as a result, the interviews took places in cosy public places (quiet corners of cafés or restaurants), the participants' own homes and an office. Then, I tried to develop rapport and trust with the participants by explaining the rationale of the study and by giving them some personal information about my family and myself. I was conscious that the participants might be tempted to shape their answers according to the way they identify me when I introduced myself. I presented myself as someone who was doing a PhD in familial bilingualism as well as a bilingual mother. In my exchange with the participants, I thought it would be right to mention that my children were not fluent in French. I wanted to clarify my personal situation to free the participants to share any experiences that they might not have shared otherwise.

I also encouraged the participants to ask me questions as I believe that the interview should be a dialogue in which each interlocutor relates to one another and tries to understand one another (Dostal, 2002, p.36). In addition, due to the phenomenological aspect of the research, and to achieve a high level of trust, I tried to contribute to the conversations and “share” some of my own experiences of familial bilingualism (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Here is an excerpt from my interview with Cristina (2012, l. 271-275) in which I shared some of my experiences at the end of the interview.

- Cristina, Ya, I suppose at the moment it is relatively easy because mummy and daddy are the centre of the universe. Soon we won't be. I saw that other people have conflicts with bedtime or whatever. This is something he could have a conflict with and I am trying to think that this is going to happen.
- Researcher, With my children, I try to maintain a little bit more discipline in our lives, for instance eating together, a bit like we do in France or in Spain. They go to Spain and they see people doing these things but there is always this thing “But we are in England, we are English, it is not the way we do it here”. I think that is a bit of a struggle when they grow older. They like it, on one hand, but on the other hand, they like an easy life as well. They say “my friends can go to bed at any time they want”. And I say “not in my house”. (Ah, ah)

During the interview, I tried to be as sensitive as I could and be aware of the emotional effects that the interview could have on the participant. Here is a second excerpt from my interview with Cristina (2012, l. 419-429).

- Cristina,            yes, well I think I have actually been thinking about that. This is becoming very soul searching ah, ah,
- Researcher,        I am sorry. We can stop if you like. Tell me if it is too...
- Cristina,            No, no, no I was just thinking that I have been thinking actually about applying for British nationality.

The interviews raised issues of identification. I had to be careful how I identified with the participants because too much identification might stop me from hearing the data and analyse it to produce knowledge (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Learning to listen without being biased by my own experiences was a challenge. I tried to keep in mind Gadamer's view that in conversations, one must take seriously "the truth claim of the person with whom one is conversing." (Gadamer, 1913, cited in Dostal, 2002, p.35).

I tried to learn from each interview to develop my interviewing skills. I was aware that to obtain good qualitative data, it was important that I gained experience in conducting interviews (Silverman, 2007) and that I needed to develop "self-confidence, adaptability, and willingness to hear what is said and change direction to catch a wisp of insight or track down a new theme" (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p.41). Interviews require good listening skills. Therefore, I tried not to interrupt the participants and encourage them to describe their experiences of familial bilingualism, including their thoughts and feelings using open questions. The use of open question was chosen to enable the participants to give me detailed answers that included descriptions of situations in which the participants' experiences occurred.

At the same time, I tried to be careful to keep the interview focused without leading the interview. I was aware that conversations are dynamic and that topics could easily change depending on my questions and reactions. Later on, when I listened to the tape of the interviews, I tried to reflect on my interruptions and the effect they had on the interviews. Faced with a new parent like Cristina, I found it hard not to take over and explain what I knew about familial bilingualism even though this would only result in poor data collection. On the other hand, once the interview was over, I took the time to give Cristina some information on the resources she could access on familial bilingualism. I believe that interviews should be real exchanges between the participant and the researcher that may provide new insights and awareness in both the researcher and the participants.

### 5.7.1. The languages used during the interviews

In interpretative qualitative research, language is very important, as it is the means through which researchers negotiate understanding to reveal the things themselves (Van Nes et al., 2010). As I mentioned previously, I chose to interview families whose members spoke either French or Spanish because I believed that it might help me to better “recognize and then explore words that have rich connotative or symbolic meanings for the people studied” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p.21) as well as understand the paralinguistic of the participants.

At the beginning of the interviews, I gave the participants the option of using their first or second language. I thought that the participants might prefer to use their first language to talk about their family lives because it might be the language they used in that context. Additionally, I was aware that the presentation of events and the intensity of emotions might vary with the language used. Studies of bilingual memory have shown that telling stories is not simply about describing facts (Schrauf, 2000; Schroeder and Marian, 2014). Pavlenko (2008a) notes that although there is always a difference when we retell a story in the same language, there is an even greater difference when we switch languages. For Pavlenko (2008a, p.171):

Stories told in the language in which the original events took place are higher in emotional intensity and amount of details (Javier et al., 1993; Marian and Kaushanskaya, 2004), while storytelling in the other language may allow speakers to discuss events that are too painful to reveal in the language in which they took place.

On the other hand, a lack of fluency might affect the stories told in a second language. According to Rintell (1990, cited in Pavlenko, 2007, p.172), “an insufficient level of proficiency or a high level of attrition may also impact the form and content of the narratives”. In this research, all the participants appeared to be fluent in the language they chose to speak during the interviews. In addition, their level of fluency did not seem to affect the presentation and amount of details they gave during the interviews. However, the language they chose to use did not necessarily match the language in which the events they described took place and it is hard to say if this influenced the reporting of their experiences or changed the level of affect they attached to them.

During the interviews, the three participants whose first language was French chose to speak French. However, the two participants whose first language was Spanish chose to speak English while one of the bilingual children chose to speak French and the other English. The other four participants whose first language was English spoke in English.



The participants did not really explain their choices of languages. It seemed that Cristina, one of the participants whose first language was Spanish chose to speak English because she had become dominant in English, her second language. In some cases, I had already established contacts in one language and it might have been awkward for the participants to change languages during the interviews.

### **5.7.2. Processing the interviews**

Processing the interviews - from transcribing the data to writing the final analysis of data - was a very long and laborious process that involved reflecting on the data during the whole research. To start with, I tried to think about the interviews immediately after they were completed and to make notes of what seemed important to the participants. I also noted what I learned and what surprised me most during the interviews. I continued to reflect on the interviews while I transcribed them, a process I tried to carry on immediately after the interviews. Then I went back on the interviews repeatedly all through the research, listening to the recordings at regular intervals to keep the data fresh in my mind. This helped me identify the themes of the research and analyse the data.

I found that as time went by, I was better able to refrain from imposing my views on the data (Willig, 2008) and explore the participants' perspectives on their experiences. The analysis of data continued through the writing of the data chapters and was very time-consuming. Through the process of writing, I discovered new convergence and divergence in the data and revised some of my early interpretations.

### **5.7.2. Transcribing, translating and coding the data**

I transcribed the interviews in their entirety immediately after each interview and tried to reproduce some of the paralinguistic such as hesitation noises to be true to the participant in the quote I used in the text. This also helped me remember the interviews during further readings. According to Pavlenko (2007, p.173), this sort of transcribing provides:

... crucial cues in the analysis of lexical choice problems, in the understanding of speakers' intentions and positioning toward the subject matter, in the analysis of affect, argument and narrative structure, and in the determination of whether a particular episode is a repeated and well-rehearsed production, a translation, or an on-line construction.

Transcribing the data was a long process that helped me to immerse myself in the data and to reflect on the content as well as the form of the interviews. The process helped

me identify the emergent themes of the data. It also helped me reflect on my interviewing skills.

I started working on the data in the original language. I read through the interviews taking notes and underlying the salient points whether they relate or not to the questions of the study (Thornton, 1988). Then I compared the interviews to reflect on what they might have in common and look for common themes. I went back to the interviews (audio and transcripts) repeatedly over the length of the research to reflect on the relevance of the themes of the research. I only translated the extracts that I used in the body of the text. I chose to use the English version of the quotes in the body of the text so as not to break the reading of the whole document. The quotes, in French, are provided in Appendix 2 (p.233) to enable the readers to read them in the original language.

To code the data, I read the transcripts line by line making detailed comments on the margins. Following a grounded theory approach, I tried to develop categories of information that would help me to illuminate the data. I then tried to “saturate” the data by interconnecting the categories and comparing cases until I reached a stage of saturation. However, I found it difficult to determine when saturation was really achieved. In the end, I collected a rich amount of data that made up about 100 pages of transcripts. In turn, the richness of the data meant that I had to keep only the few themes that are developed in the three data chapters. I identified the themes as being part of the experiential claims, concerns and understandings of each participant. There were the things that mattered most to the participants. For example, I noted that several participants commented on their use of languages in terms of “choice” so it became a category, which was clustered with other categories such as “emotional language” to form the theme of first language use that is discussed in chapter six.

I chose to use grounded theory because it is a method that helps obtain a thick description of a phenomena which is a description containing many details and conceptual structures and meanings. According to Geertz (1973), thick descriptions go beyond factual account and need to include commentary, interpretation and interpretations of those comments and interpretations. At first, I found the use of grounded theory a bit constraining as I was expecting themes to emerge from the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1999). However, Corbin and Holt (2005) warn against Glaser and Straus’s version of themes just emerging from the data like if there was only “one reality” or “one truth” embedded in the data. Instead the authors remind us that there are multiple ways of interpreting the data. They advocate a constructionist view in which researchers identify and develop concepts which are redefined in the alternating process of data collection and data analysis. What matters is to actually go to the field and construct concepts and theory

out of actual data, rather than force the data into the concepts (Corbin and Holt, 2005). For Charmaz (2000), concepts and theory are also co-constructed between researchers and participants.

I used grounded theory as a method to generate my themes by coding the data and trying to highlight what was unique to my participants but also what might be common to all the participants and families (Riessman, 2001). This was a lengthy process in which I produced several lists.

Here is an example of one of those lists. This is a preliminary analysis of Isabelle's first interview:

- The choice of language and culture for parents and children: Isabelle talks about how she chose to speak several languages as a youngster. In her data, choice is prevalent.

- The role of mothers and responsibility to pass on language and culture: Isabelle gives several examples of how she has been feeling responsible for her children's bilingualism all through their lives.

- Affectivity: in the interview, there are different positive and negative emotions ranging from good, special, proud, lucky, happy, relax to worried, different, excluded, rejected, sad, anxious with additional concepts of emotional language and cultural emotions.

- The open-mindedness of the next generation: Isabelle who comes from a bilingual family is an example of how open she has been to learning languages and she also reports how her own children enjoy learning and using French.

The second interview produced the following themes and conceptual categories:

- The choice of language and culture: for parents and children (free or imposed); language as a career move. In the second interview, Isabelle reiterates her notion of choice

- The role of mothers and responsibility to pass on language and culture (chosen). This is also developed in the second interview with more examples of Isabelle's feelings of responsibility.

- Affectivity: different positive and negative emotions ranging from good, feeling special, proud, lucky, happy, relax to worried, different, excluded, rejected, sad, anxious) with concepts of emotional language and cultural emotions. These feelings are also developed in the second interview.

- Transitional identities: in her second interview, Isabelle develops the notion that her personality has changed through the years and that it may have an impact on her feelings and her social relationships

- The open-mindedness of the next generation: in her second interview, Isabelle talks more about her bilingual children as adults and how there seem to be very open to bilingualism and raising their own bilingual families.

Once I had analysed all the interviews the three themes that I eventually retained were:

1. Language acquisition and transmission that I developed in chapter 5 provided answers to the first and second questions of the thesis. All the participants explained how they had acquired their languages. Their experiences were very diverse for such a small sample. They also all had different strategies to transmit their heritage languages. I was very interested in how first experiences of language acquisition had played a part in the strategies adopted by parents.
2. Bilingual cultural identities that I develop in chapter 6 provided answers to the second and third questions of the thesis. The participants gave lots of example of biculturalism and talked about changes in their identities and the identities of their children. I was interested in examples of how the families managed their bilingualism and biculturalism in society and the participants provided examples of events that were significant in the lives of the bilingual families. A lot of these examples were drawn from school and work experiences.
3. The emotional impact of familial bilingualism that I developed in chapters 5 and 7 provided answers to the third question of the thesis. Without being prompted, the participants explained what familial bilingualism represented for them and how it affected them emotionally. This was a theme I was particularly interested in. The participants gave rich descriptions of their emotional experiences as parents of bilingual children.

To test the coherence and plausibility of the themes I did some presentations of my work which included a presentation on feeling isolated and reflected on the feedback from the audiences.

## **5.8. Analysis of the data**

The analysis is not about adhering to any one correct approach or set of right techniques; it is imaginative, artful, flexible, and reflexive. It should also be methodical, researcherly, and intellectually rigorous. (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, p.4)

My analysis of data was inspired by both grounded theory and phenomenological perspectives. I tried to link the two methods of analysis. Grounded theory seemed suited

to my data as a thematic method of analysis that focuses on people in relation to their contexts (Gibson, 2013). However, as mentioned above, I had some concerns about the emergence of themes because according to Anzul et al. (1997, p.205)

Themes do not “emerge” like Venus on the half shell (...). They reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them.

I also looked at phenomenology to try to make sense of the notions of phenomena and experiences. According to Smith et al. (2009), the aim of phenomenological research is to present a particular experience in a way that is recognisable and understandable to anyone with the same experience. To achieve this, phenomenological analysis should be systematic and thorough and only retain some of the elements of the experiences that cannot be changed without losing the meaning of the narrative of the experience (ibid.). This is achieved by abstracting the themes that are essential aspects of the experiences described by the participants and "without which the experience would not have been the same" (Van Manen, 1990; Moustakas, 1994). This helped me gain some confidence in selecting the final themes. In phenomenological research, themes can either be individual and unique to one of a few individual participants or be collective and shared by participants. Meanings also depend on the socio-cultural and linguistic context. As a result, there seemed to be a multiplicity of themes in my research.

Although I got very interested in phenomenological perspectives informed by methods including interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), I could not fully commit to conducting an IPA because the data I had collected from the participants reflected experiences of familial bilingualism that were very large and diverse while IPA focuses on very specific, contained experiences. The participants were also very different. However, my readings about phenomenology inspired me to examine the data in terms of individual experiences and helped me to understand that each experience was particular and that I should not try to generalise the findings. They also made me aware of the danger of over-interpreting the data or reading hidden meanings in the words of the participants. I learned that the meaning or understanding of the experiences had to come from the participants (Smith et al., 2009). For example, although I had an experience of childhood bilingualism, I had to be open to what two of my participants said about their own experiences of childhood bilingualism with a regional language because our three experiences were very different. They had taken place at different times and in different contexts.

### 5.8.2. Writing the data chapters

The writing of the three data chapters made me try different groupings of themes and refine the themes further. I reorganised the data chapters several times in order to produce a structure that would lead to a more organised and detailed account of the data as well as a better narrative account of this structure. I decided that there was a need to first introduce the participants and present their perceptions of being bilingual in context. Eventually, I wanted to show how ordinary people experience and make sense of the development (or non-development) of bilingualism in their families. For Pavlenko (2007, p.167):

Content cannot be analysed in separation from context and form, and thematization is a preliminary analytical step and cannot be confused with analysis.

I then organised the data in three chapters wrapped around the three main themes that seemed the most salient for my participants. Once I had identified the main themes and patterns in the data, the data was still very difficult to untangle because of the complexity of bilingualism, which mixed elements belonging to language, society, and emotions. I decided to treat the cultural aspects as part of chapters seven and eight. The theme of emotions also permeated the participants' experiences. It could not be extracted easily to accommodate the neat arrangement of the data chapters. As a result, the theme of emotion, which has a dedicated chapter eight, is also touched on in chapter six because some parents explained the use of their native language and their motivation to raise their children bilingually as an emotional need. Burkitt (2014, p.6) describes the complexity of dealing with feelings and emotions:

That feelings and emotions cannot be understood as things in themselves, which, as such, can be isolated and studied. Feelings and emotions only arise in patterns of relationships, which include the way we look and perceive the world, and these also result in patterns of activity that can become dispositions – ways of acting in particular situations that are not wholly within our conscious control and are, thus, partly involuntary.

All through the writing, one of my main concerns was to find a way to present the data in a phenomenological way by separating my own voice and knowledge, as well as the literature, from the voice of the participants. Ideally, I wanted to let the participants' perspective and sense-making structure the analysis and write-up. However, having chosen a mixed interpretative method of analysis, I found the interpretation difficult to manage as interpreting is by definition subjective. Therefore, I found it hard not to lead the data and impose my own voice. I was aware that I carried my own set of cultural

attitudes, which would influence my perceptions and interpretations of the data. However, the fact that participants often said things that I did not expect to hear helped me to analyse the data less subjectively.

To enable the participants' voice to be heard I opted to use extracts from the interviews although finding a right balance between quotes and comments was difficult. The selection of quotes itself was difficult. The quotes were often very rich and mixed elements that belong to different themes and chapters. I also had to find a balance between the quotes and the text of the analysis and later reduced the length of the quotes because the quotes were overriding the data chapters.

Another concern was how to deal with the literature. As bilingualism is so multidimensional, I was worried about not having sufficient knowledge in some aspects of bilingualism to be able to analyse the participants' experience of familial bilingualism. I was aware that any discussion of bilingualism would have to draw upon a range of sources and in order to analyse the data I went back and forth between data and theory although it may not conform to a phenomenological approach in which literature is normally interrogated from the point of view of what emerges from the data.

### **5.8.3. Reflecting on the methodology**

As I had chosen to conduct qualitative research that was interpretative in nature, I had to deal with a high degree of uncertainty not only at the beginning of the research as mentioned by Rubin and Rubin (1995, p.41) in the following quote but all through the research:

The qualitative researcher has to have a high tolerance for uncertainty, especially at the beginning of the project when nothing is really set and is very flexible as the entire design of the research may change similarly to the main questions of the thesis that are bound to change as the research evolves.

Having first analysed the data using grounded theory, I found it difficult to adopt a phenomenological approach to keep track of the phenomenological essence of familial bilingualism. I particularly struggled with the double hermeneutic notion that the analysis should be the product of the researcher making sense of the participant making sense of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). In this respect, I had to be very careful not to over-interpret the interpretations of the participants and make sure I did not deduce interpretations that were simply not supported by data.

When I first compared the data of the participants to get to the essence of their experiences, my analysis ended up looking like a giant catalogue of what the participants had to say on all matters of bilingualism. I tried to construct a structure that gave insights

into familial bilingualism and the meaning associated with it but the more I studied the data the more I seemed to find new material to add to the structure. For a long time, my analysis was very descriptive and I felt swamped by the data. I did not seem to be able to be selective enough. For example, I could see that the emotional experiences involved in the data all related to how the participants and their families try to manage their personal, linguistic, national and cultural identities, and the relationships connected to them. However, I found it hard to connect the management of identity, culture and relationships to link the events described by participants to the emotions they experienced. I had to restructure the data chapters several times to relate identities and culture with emotions.

In addition, whilst I knew that the whole study had to engage with existing theory and the wider literature (Smith et al., 2009); I had difficulties making connections between my data and the literature. In particular, I worried about how to speak about the emotions that the participants experienced. The research seemed social-psychological in many ways and I had to decide how much knowledge on emotions would be helpful in examining the subjective involvement of emotions as experienced by participants.

## **5.9. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I presented my research design, data collection and analysis. I discussed my choice of methodology. I described how I chose to conduct a qualitative research that mixed perspectives from grounded theory and phenomenology in order to examine the experiences of familial bilingualism of my participants. Moreover, I examined how I had to reflect on issues of reflexivity, as I had to constantly challenge my own position in the research. I probed into issues of participation, subjectivity and voice that affected all stages of the research from choosing a methodology to writing up the data analysis.

The following chapters, entitled “The parents’ language beliefs and understanding of familial bilingualism”, “The parents’ challenges and issues in developing bilingual families and family language policies” and “The emotional impact of implementing familial bilingualism”, will present the data analysis. They focus on the three areas or themes indicated in this chapter which are the perception of bilingualism, the strategies to develop familial bilingualism and the emotional impact of familial bilingualism. Finally, in the concluding chapter, I will present my final observations, reflections and recommendations.





Table 1 - Profiles of the participants

Parents								
Name	Child	Parent	Gender	Age	Nationalities	First –second languages	Activities	Date and duration of interviews
1. Isabelle	x	x	F	40s	French-British	French-English	Teacher and caterer	May 2011 – 40 minutes June 2011 – 25 minutes
2. Andrea		x	F	40s	Mexican-British	Spanish-English	Public relations	Dec 2011 – 15 minutes
3. Mike		x	M	45	British	English	Executive	Dec 2011 – 15 minutes
4. Cristina	x	x	F	40s	Spanish	Spanish-English	Lecturer	July 2012 – 1 hour
5. Julie		x	F	50s	British	English-Spanish	Lecturer	Mar 2013 – 1 hour
6. Alain		x	M	58	French	French-English	Caterer	Nov 2013 – 40 minutes
7. Marc	x	x	M	55	French	Catalan-Spanish-French-English	Caterer	Jan 2014 – 60 minutes
8. Linda		x	F	50s	British	English-French	Therapist	May 2014 – 55 minutes
Children:								
9. Manu	x		M	19	British-Mexican	English-Spanish	Student	Dec 2011 - 15 minutes
10. Sophie	x		F	18	British-French	English-French	Student	Feb 2012- 35 minutes
11. Laurie	x		F	32	British-French	English-French	Caterer	Nov 2013 – 10 minutes

## Chapter six

### **The parents' language beliefs and understanding of familial bilingualism**

I've always said that for me it was important to speak my language, that it was my emotional language that it was how I expressed what I felt and that I could not speak anything else to my children and it was the same for him (Andie). So, it happened naturally. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 87-90)

#### **6.1. Introduction**

In this study, the parents talked a lot about the process of becoming bilingual, its challenges and its success. Before they talked about their children's bilingualism, most participants talked at length about their own bilingualism or second language acquisition. The participants' acquisition and transmission of languages seemed more complex than I had anticipated. Therefore, in this first chapter of data analysis, I first examine what each parent participant said about their own experiences of language acquisition and bilingualism to make sense of their conceptualization of bilingualism. The parent participants talked about choice, motivation, access and exposure to languages. Then, I examine what the parents said about their main motivation to raise their children bilingually, which they described as emotional as in the quote above.

The strategies that the parents implemented to help their children become bilingual and the children's language acquisition are examined in chapter seven.

#### **6.2.1. The parents' experiences of bilingualism and second language acquisition**

The parents in the study had willingly moved to another country as young adults and had not experienced any major difficulties in acquiring the languages of their new countries. However, the contexts and their previous experiences of language acquisition were very diverse. The languages acquired were different and included regional languages.

All the parent participants had very different experiences of bilingualism that theoretically reflected aspects of first language acquisition and second language acquisition

(SLA) although the distinction did not really seem to matter in the sense that all the parents had become proficient in two or more languages. Three of the parents had multiple experiences of language acquisition and use. They had also experienced childhood bilingualism. Of these three parents, Isabelle and Marc seemed to talk rather positively about their experiences in general while Cristina, the third parent, appeared to be less positive about her childhood experience of bilingualism. Three other parents, Alain, Julie and Linda, learned their second languages as young adults by immersing themselves in the languages of the new countries they migrated to, which were respectively England, Venezuela and France. While Alain and Julie acquired their second languages, English and Spanish, without formal learning, Linda acquired French through immersion and formal learning.

The notion of “choice” is recurrent in the parents’ data on language acquisition. Choice is theorized in the literature of SLA on bilingual cultural identities in which choosing to learn and use another language is said to enable individuals to construct new cultural identities (Kramersch, 2009). Other recurring themes of this chapter include issues of motivation, access and exposure (Piller, 2002b, De Houwer, 2009a; 2009b) that are linked to childhood bilingualism and second language acquisition and are much discussed in the general literature of bilingualism.

In the following seven sub-sections, I present the individual experiences of the seven parent participants, highlighting the main points of how they conceptualise bilingualism in the data. Thus, I examine what they say about their own bilingualism, a topic that they all commented on at length, which suggests that for the parents in the study, these experiences of language acquisition and bilingualism were very important. And indeed, these experiences seem to have been very influential and might have played some part in their decision to raise their children bilingually.

#### **6.2.1.1. Isabelle’s experiences of second language acquisition: Pragmatic choices and a strong desire for languages from childhood**

Isabelle was raised in France in the seventies in a French-speaking family. In the following quote, she describes the context of her upbringing in details and this is useful to understand some characteristics of her language acquisition. The quote suggests that Isabelle was raised in a family that stimulated her spirit of independence from a young age.

My mother had me when she was very young. She was 22 when I was born. My parents, they are “soixante-huitards”, they are people who were born just after the war and who were a bit hippie, socialist all that, very open, whereas my friends the

ones who were the same age as me, all their parents were much older and they were more conservative, older France, stricter. At home too, I was always very free but at the same time that also meant that I was less taken care of if you like. I was less, as they say, less supervised. (Isabelle, 2011, l. 357-364)

In the following quote, Isabelle is very precise about her childhood experiences of language acquisition that she presents in terms of choice. The contexts of acquisition seem important for Isabelle who gives very precise indications of times and places using such words as “at that time”, “at the same time”. In the quote, Isabelle talks about how her family briefly migrated from France to Iran when she was a child and how she had chosen to acquire Farsi along with English and French. The quote suggests that as a youngster Isabelle was pragmatic in her choices and prioritised the languages she chose to acquire by concentrating on the languages she needed to use in her everyday life. For example, Isabelle explains that she chose to attend an Iranian school and thus needed to acquire Farsi. On the other hand, Isabelle’s mother had German ancestry but Isabelle explains that in Iran Isabelle rejected German because she could not handle more languages than those she needed to use in her everyday life. However, Isabelle seems aware that German might have been important for her mother when she says that her mother had tried to use German at home.

At that time, I was not doing German yet. My grandmother is German and Mummy, she tried to speak German for a long time. But then, I had a rejection, it was a bit too much at the same time ... I studied German afterwards but I think that at that time, I did not need it. It was not part of my life. I was going to school in Farsi. I had friends to whom we only spoke English because they did not go to the same school as me, there was French, and I think that I had spoken German a little before we left for Iran but not enormously. (Isabelle, 2011, l 20-30)

Interestingly, in the context of an interview on familial bilingualism, Isabelle does not delve into her family’s use of German and her own acquisition of German during her childhood although she mentions that she had spoken German a little. Isabelle hints that she learned German later when she says, “I was not doing German yet”. The quote seems to suggest that Isabelle does not feel defined by the past and her family’s story. Additionally, Isabelle seems to make a distinction between the languages she spoke in natural settings and the languages she learned in school, which was the case of German. When she talks about German, she uses the vocabulary of school to say that she was “doing German” rather than “speaking German”.

In the following quote, Isabelle expands on her strategies to acquire languages. She explains that, as a youngster, she had sought to enhance her school knowledge of languages by immersing herself in environments in which the languages were spoken. As a child, Isabelle seems to have had a need to practise the languages she wanted to acquire in situ.

Indeed, Isabelle seems to have associated language acquisition with communication very early on in life when she says that she “really had to go to the countries to speak the languages”. This, in turn, seems to have facilitated Isabelle’s language acquisition and motivated her to acquire more languages. In the quote, Isabelle talks about her visits to England to practise English. She also talks about how excelling in English in school had proved psychologically rewarding. It thus seems that languages became very important for Isabelle when she was very young and that she enjoyed learning several languages (English, German and Italian). Isabelle seems to have had many opportunities to learn languages and travel to the countries where those languages were spoken.

I often came to England ... because when I came back from Iran, I did English in school and I was immediately the best in English in school and I did not like school that much. I loved the English class and I loved being the best. And I often chose to come on holiday, I did some exchanges through a friend of my mother, who was a teacher, who had her family in England, she came to France, I went to their house. It was a little bit the same afterwards with the other languages because I took German as a second language, Italian as a third language. From the moment I learned a language, I really had to go to the countries to speak the language. (Isabelle, 2011, 140-47)

Isabelle’s childhood experience can be used to illustrate some of the cognitive and psychological advantages of childhood bilingualism. It seems that Isabelle became a confident language learner because she was happy to learn several languages and to go to foreign countries to practise the languages. In secondary school, Isabelle also chose a course of studies that enabled her to study several languages. In her interviews, Isabelle talks about the languages she acquired but does not talk explicitly about being interested in the countries where the languages were spoken as a main motivation to acquire her languages. Instead, she seems to highlight her need to practice the languages in situ.

Isabelle’s experience shows that experiences of language acquisition are very individual and cannot be generalised. In the following quote, Isabelle explains that when her family lived in Iran, her brother, contrary to her, chose to attend school in French. Isabelle raises the issue of proficiency. She explains that she had reached a good level in Farsi. It seems that her attainment in Farsi was a motivating factor in her choice of schooling. In the quote, Isabelle also talks about the obsessive nature of her interest for languages. She seems to contrast her brother’s interests in mathematics to her own interest in languages highlighting the obsessive nature of both. She says that her brother was “less obsessed with languages” and describes him as a “math geek”. The word “geek” here connotes a person obsessed with mathematics.

He was less obsessed with languages than me I think. He was less of a linguist, in fact. He was a math geek; he had a more scientific brain also. It was a choice because, in fact, in my life, I would not have really needed to speak languages as I did. I chose them in school. In Iran, at the Iranian school, I was going to the Farsi classes because I had reached a good level. My brother, he was doing less of them because he preferred to stay in the classes in French so it was a choice all the same. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 55-59)

To sum up, Isabelle's experience was very individual and context dependent. As a youngster, Isabelle had opportunities for a variety of experiences of language learning. She was motivated to learn languages because she wanted to be able to communicate orally and one of her strategies was to be immersed in the languages by staying in the countries where the languages she was interested in were spoken. This immersion seems to have contributed to Isabelle's success in language acquisition and further motivated Isabelle to learn more languages. And Isabelle developed a strong liking for language. As an adult, Isabelle defines herself as a linguist. Isabelle also self-reports having been obsessed with languages, which could be tied in with the concept of the desire for languages developed by Kramsch (2009).

#### **6.2.1.2. Marc's experiences of bilingualism: A determining and positive experience of childhood familial multilingualism**

Although Marc acquired several languages as a child, his experiences of language acquisition were different from Isabelle's although they share some similarities. In a very different context than Isabelle's, Marc became a receptive or passive bilingual of Spanish and Catalan as a child (De Houwer, 2009b). In his interview, Marc was as precise as Isabelle when he contextualised his childhood as shown in the following quote in which he describes in detail what motivated his parents to move to France. This quote offers some background information about Marc's family that may be useful to understand Marc's receptive bilingualism. It shows that the context of Marc's family immigration to France was very different from Isabelle's migration to Iran.

I must start at the beginning, my parents came on vacation to see my aunt and in fact, I do not know if it really was a holiday, it might have been an experience they wanted to have to go to France to see my aunt because she might have told them that in France, it was better, I don't know. And in fact, my parents were there and then uh, uh, and as my father was a bricklayer ... a friend of my aunt asked them to do some work for her... (Marc, 2014, 1 80-88)

Thus, Marc was raised in the sixties in monolingual France by parents who were Spanish economic immigrants. Marc's parents used their first languages, Spanish and

Catalan, to communicate at home. And, from my personal experience, I know that at that time in France, descendants of immigrants like Marc were not encouraged to become bilingual by acquiring their parents' first languages. Marc's generation was supposed to "integrate" through language and culture (Kristeva, 1988; Todd, 1994; 1999; Berry, 1990; 1997; Piller, 2015). However, this does not necessarily mean that Marc considered he had no choice. In the following quote, when he talks about language acquisition, Marc, like Isabelle, talks in terms of choice. Marc says that he and his siblings did not choose to speak Spanish or Catalan with their parents possibly because they did not want to be different from their monolingual peers (Bialystok, 2001). However, Marc also highlights the normalcy of the experience of hearing his parents speak in another language than French when he says, "it was normal". This quote shows that as a child, Marc did not seem to have any issues with his parents speaking other languages than French, at home. This aligns with the view that if a child grows up hearing multiple languages, these languages become the languages of his environment. (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004)

For me, it was normal to hear my father speak Catalan and my mother speak Spanish and sometimes in French eh, eh but we (the children) did not like, I remember, to speak Spanish or Catalan, we answered, our parents would speak in their languages in fact and we would answer in French. So, there you are, it was like that. (Marc, 2014, 1 26-29)

Furthermore, as a child, Marc did not seem to treat his parents' languages differently although one was a national language (Spanish) and the other, a regional language (Catalan). This might be because Marc acquired both languages outside of Spain and did not experience direct prejudices about regional languages. On the contrary, Marc seems to have been interested in the different forms of the Catalan language that he reported hearing as a child. In the following quote, Marc explains that as a child he would regularly be immersed in Catalan when he visited his extended family and that this would give him an opportunity to hear other forms of Catalan that he could compare to the form spoken by his father.

There you are. It was usually a month's holiday. Every year, we did that practically. And it was quite interesting. But it is true that the Catalan of Escala for example, in northern Catalonia, it had nothing to do with the Catalan my father spoke because he used to talk the Catalan of Emposta. It is a bit of a dialect, in fact. And when my aunt spoke to us in Catalan, it was yet a little bit harder. It was more difficult to understand but we understood. We understood huh Catalan and Spanish, we understood well from very young and it was quite interesting that. (Marc, 2014, 1 47-53)



As a young adult, Marc chose to acquire and speak several languages. Marc seemed motivated by a strong desire to communicate as demonstrated in the following quote. For example, Marc says that he wanted to learn Greek because he happened to be working in a restaurant where Greek was spoken. This suggests that like Isabelle, Marc had grown into a confident language learner who could consider learning new languages, such as Italian, Portuguese and Greek, independently and for his own gratification. Marc also seems to find that learning languages is easy when he says that he could have learned nearly ten languages. The quote also seems to suggest that, as a youngster, Marc, like Isabelle, had a strong desire for languages (Kramersch, 2009).

But it's true that when I came to England I went to university and I did Italian, I did Portuguese, I did, part-time in fact, I did Portuguese, I did Italian, I did Greek but that was because of the job I had because when I arrived here in England, I worked in fish and chips shops with Greeks and so I got a bit interested in Greek, I bought some books and I worked on my own and I have, but well I did not continue but it's true, it's a pity because if I had done that, since I was 15 and I had started to do languages, I will speak nearly ten of them. (Marc, 2014, 1 141-148)

And like Isabelle, Marc self-reports that he was motivated to do languages because he was good in languages in school. Marc might have derived some psychological benefits from it too. However, Marc does not mention the same strategies as Isabelle. Marc seems to attribute his good results in languages directly to his bilingual background. In the following quote, Marc switches from “I” to “we” to generalise his experience. Marc seems to think that children like him or his son, Hadrien, may have innate skills that enable them to acquire languages effortlessly, “without working of course”, emphasising the easy nature of language acquisition.

I wanted to do languages as a child because I was good at languages. I was good, in school, in English, thingy, Spanish, it's because I was good. I was always the best in the class because it was easy, without working of course. We did not need to work. It is the same for my son in school, he doesn't work but he is good because it is his language, normal. (Marc, 2014, 1 132-136)

In the last quote, Marc also seems to establish a link between language acquisition and ownership of languages when using the possessive. He seems to imply that his son has gained ownership of the French language by virtue of it been passed on to him by his French father and that this ownership could by itself facilitate his son's language acquisition. And in the following quote, Marc is careful to point out that this innate ability he refers to in the last quote is due to luck and is in no case a proof of intelligence. In this quote, Mark contributes to debunking one of the myths of bilingualism that links bilingualism with

intelligence (Sorace, 2006; Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 2009b; Baker 2011; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2013, Genesee, 2013).

We are lucky. Incredible, all the people, they think that I'm clever, no I'm not clever. I speak English and French and then afterwards there is a Spanish friend who passes by and I am going to speak Spanish, and people look at me like that. "You are clever", no, I'm not clever. I speak because I was born with it. (Marc, 2014, 1 281-285)

However, Marc also seems to share some of the misconceptions that monolinguals have about code-switching. In the following quote, Marc explains what he thinks is happening in the brain of bilingual children to enable them to acquire language easily. Marc talks about a special mechanism in the brain in the form of boxes that is reminiscent of the metaphor of boxes used variously in the literature on cognition. (Chomsky, 1986; Bialystok, 2010; 2015).

And also, languages, it is easy for us because from very young there were (little) boxes in the brain, there is a language here, a language there and we move from one to the other without problem, without mixing ... (Marc, 2014, 1 137-139)

To sum up, Marc's experience is also very individual and context dependent. As a descendant of immigrants, Marc learned his languages mainly in a familial context and he highlights the normalcy of hearing different foreign languages at home as well as the tension that might have been due to the "one nation, one language" language ideology that favoured monolingualism in France (Piller, 2015). Marc seems to have an intuitive knowledge of bilingualism coupled with some of the misconceptions that monolinguals have on bilingualism. Marc seems convinced that as a bilingual child, he had innate abilities that enabled him to learn languages easily. In turn, this seems to have motivated him to learn more languages. Like Isabelle, Marc seems to have developed a strong desire for languages (Kramsch, 2009). Additionally, when talking about his son, Marc seems to imply that his son would acquire French easily because it was being passed on to him by virtue of having a French father.

### **6.2.1.3. Cristina's experiences of bilingualism: A childhood experience of bilingualism including a regional language**

Cristina came from Galicia, which is a bilingual region of Spain in which there are two spoken languages, Spanish and Galician. Like the two previous participants, Cristina was careful to contextualise her childhood experiences and this was helpful to understand her attitude to Galician and her progress in that language. In the following quote, Cristina

explains that when she was a child, the linguistic situation of Galicia was quite different to what it is today. There was a stigma attached to Galician, a language that had been banned during the Spanish dictatorship. When Cristina was growing up, Galician was not taught in schools and it was viewed as a language only spoken by people seen as uneducated.

Well, in my case because I was born in the seventies and at the time, the Galician language was only really starting to come back after Franco's dictatorship. I ended up speaking only in Spanish. (Cristina, 2012, 1 114-117)

When the democracy came, Galician suddenly could be spoken without issue and you could write in the Galician language. And it was an accepted language as opposed to the language of the street that people who do not have education speak... (Cristina, 2012, 1 125-128)

In the following quote, Cristina reports that as a result of the linguistic context in which she grew up, she did not speak much Galician as a child and that today her Galician remains limited to conversational Galician within the family.

I understand Galician. I can speak it in family situations but I really don't feel comfortable speaking it. It is not something that comes to me naturally. (Cristina, 2012, 1 116-117)

The following quote reiterates the importance of context for language acquisition. In the quote, Cristina contrasts her own experience of becoming bilingual to the experience she thinks her son, Tommy, may have, now that the linguistic situation in Galicia has changed. Cristina seems to assume that Tommy will acquire both Spanish and Galician because he will hear both languages within her family and in the community. For Cristina, Tommy will thus become multilingual in English, Spanish and Galician, albeit dominant in English and possibly receptive in Galician. Cristina does not mention that unlike her, Tommy will not be immersed in both Galician and Spanish while growing up. However, when in Galicia, Cristina thinks that Tommy might benefit from being immersed in Galician which has gained a higher value.

But yes, they (Cristina's family) speak to the children in Spanish and the children speak Spanish. My father and my family mostly speak Galician and there are many other people. The thing is, I don't think he (Cristina's son) will become fluent in Galician as I am not. But he will understand it as I do because it is everywhere around. It is part of what it is to be in Galicia. People speak Galician. (Cristina, 2012, 1 177-181)

To sum up, Cristina's experience of childhood bilingualism is interesting because like Mark, one of Cristina's languages is a regional language. However, contrary to Isabelle and Marc, Cristina seems to talk less positively about her experience of childhood

bilingualism in Spain because of the stigma that was attached to Galician when she was growing up. As a child, Cristina was not motivated to learn Galician, a regional language that she heard in a familial context because Galician was not valued by the community as a whole. However, Cristina's experience shows that the value ascribed to a regional language can change over time and that it may be possible for her son to acquire Galician more easily today because Galician is more valued and is spoken more widely. Cristina expects Tommy to acquire the language from his extended family and the Galician community. In her interview, Cristina does not talk about transmitting Galician to her son. She is aiming at transmitting Spanish.

#### **6.2.1.4. Alain's experience of second language acquisition: Instrumental bilingualism**

Compared to the other participants, Alain did not talk much about his experience of becoming bilingual. However, what he said about his motivation was interesting. Alain was raised in France, in a monolingual family, and moved to England in his early twenties to learn English in situ, in a restaurant. It is clear from the data that Alain's experience of bilingualism was very instrumental. As a young man, Alain needed to acquire English to progress professionally. In the following quote, Alain self-reports that he acquired English within six months of living in England, which seems a considerable achievement considering Alain was self-taught. However, Alain only seemed to be interested in the language skills he needed to do his job properly. He did not seem to be interested in acquiring English literacy for example. And, in the following quote, Alain jests about his lack of skills in written English.

I worked in an Italian restaurant and it took me six months to learn English, on the job, hey, not to write it, if I wrote it, even now I write it my way (Ah, Ah, Ah) I've never done, I have never taken any classes. Don't ask me to write a book (Ah, Ah, Ah, Ah) (Alain, 2013, 1 81-85)

To sum up, Alain's experience shows that the motivation to become bilingual and the meaning of language acquisition can be very different for different bilingual people. Alain became bilingual in English because he stayed in England for professional reasons. He seems happy to be able to get by in English in his professional context and does not have much to say about bilingualism. During the unstructured interview, Alain seemed more interested in talking about his professional achievements. Contrary to the previous participants, when prompted about bilingualism, Alain talked more extensively about the experiences of language acquisition of his daughter and grandchildren.

#### **6.2.1.5. Julie's experience in second language acquisition: A problematic acquisition of Spanish and an issue of power**

Julie, who was raised in England and was an English teacher, was very articulate about her slow acquisition of Spanish as a second language. She acquired Spanish as a young adult when she moved to Venezuela to live in that country with her Venezuelan husband, Ramiro. Ramiro imposed English as the language of communication of the family.

In the following quote, Julie talks about her acquisition of Spanish explaining that she had not experienced pressure to acquire Spanish quickly because she did not really need Spanish to communicate either at home, where she spoke English with her husband or at work, where she taught English. Julie reports that she was slow to become fluent in Spanish. Julie seems to attribute her slow progress in Spanish to her lack of exposure to “educated” Spanish. In the following quote, in which Julie describes the working-class context in which she was practising Spanish, Julie uses the adjective “educated” four times. Julie seems to question the level of Spanish spoken by the people she was in contact with who did not seem to speak the “educated” form of Spanish that Julie seems to have wanted to acquire.

My Spanish did not develop. It was OK. I could relate but it took quite a long time because I spoke English at home, because I spoke English at work, teaching English. I did not actually speak an awful lot of Spanish beyond going to the supermarket or occasional exchanges with the neighbour. And so, the progress in Spanish, my progress in Spanish, I think, was probably quite slow. It was limiting that I did not speak to educated people about educated issues. I did not read educated newspapers. I just dealt with market people or bus drivers and people who weren't educated because we lived in a fairly working class area of that town as well. So, I did not get a lot of input. (Julie, 2013, 1 58-66)

Julie's insistence on acquiring an educated form of Spanish might suggest that she might have wanted to protect her social identity as an educated person in her second language (Norton, 2013, Pavlenko, 2002; 2003). However, paradoxically, in the more educated context of her place of work, Julie did not try to practise her Spanish. In the following quote, Julie reflects that when she was at work, she did not practise her Spanish because she was convinced that speaking exclusively in English would benefit both her colleagues and her students. However, in retrospect, Julie seems to question her attitude calling it a “rather limited view”.

And on reflection, I realised how isolated I was from my colleagues at work because I spoke English at work because I had this rather limited view. I did not

socialise, you see, in Spanish. So I had this view that when I go to work, I must speak English. And everybody in the department spoke English because it was an English language department. And the students all benefited from me speaking English and I spoke English to the students... My assumption that me speaking English at work was the best thing to do for everybody because I was practising, I was demonstrating, I was giving everybody the opportunity to practise English... I thought that was great... (Julie, 2013, 1 227-232)

In the following quote, Julie also reveals that she eventually acquired a good level of Spanish through speaking with friends. However, the quote also shows that even when Julie became a more proficient speaker of Spanish, she continued to have high expectations of language acquisition and bilingualism. Julie reflects that although she had spent twenty years in Venezuela, she could not call herself bilingual. Julie uses the expression “certain things would never sit naturally” in which she uses the same adverb “naturally” that Cristina also used to report that Galician “did not come naturally” to her. With this expression, Julie seems to express some frustration at not been able to speak Spanish perfectly. In the quote, Julie reveals that she has some specialist knowledge of second language acquisition when she explains that her Spanish “fossilised”, or in other words that she had stopped progressing in her acquisition of Spanish. To illustrate her point, Julie gives an example of her uncertainty about the use of the term “taxista”. Julie does not seem to accept that fossilisation forms part of the process of second language acquisition (Han, 2003; 2004).

For me, bilingual means of equal weight and although it (Julie’s Spanish) was fluent, there were always going to be references and pronunciation. I had fossilisation, you know. I always had to think about “el taxista” as opposed to “la taxista”. I don’t know. I still don’t know now whether I can say la taxista or el taxista for a female taxi-driver. So, there were certain things that would never sit naturally for me. So, that for me that’s what I mean by not being bilingual but I became very fluent because I talked so much about my personal problems to friends... So, my Spanish became very good, the practice and the long hours of talking. (Julie, 2013, 1 212-219)

Julie’s high expectations of bilingualism seemed to stem from a belief that her two languages should be equal. Julie considered that she had become fluent rather than bilingual because her two languages did not “weigh” the same. However, her notion of equal weight is part of the myth of balanced bilingualism. Grosjean (1982), for example, uses the terms “equal” and “fluent” to demystify bilingualism. For him, “contrary to general belief, bilinguals are rarely equally fluent in their languages” (ibid. p.vii) and it is thus rather unrealistic to seek the same level of fluency in both languages. This view is widely shared. Grosjean uses the terms “fluent” and “bilingual” interchangeably while Julie uses them to establish a difference between a very good and a perfect use of a language. This, in turn,

shows how subjective the concept of bilingualism can be and how it is assessed by some speakers. For Julie, for example, knowledge of another language does not seem sufficient to qualify as a bilingual. For Julie, to be bilingual you should have been born in a bilingual family, and thus have experienced childhood bilingualism, or live in the country of the second language as she explains in the following quote.

Usually, this [bilingualism] happens from birth. Usually, one of the parents is a native speaker of at least one of the languages. I think it is unlikely that somebody would become bilingual if they didn't either live in the country where one of the languages was spoken or their parents were not native speakers of one or both of the languages. (Julie, 2013, 1 22-26)

Although Julie fulfils the second criteria, she seems reluctant to define herself as bilingual despite giving some evidence of her bilingualism. In the following quote, Julie self-reports that her oral Spanish had become “excellent”. This could mean that for Julie, there is more to bilingualism than language skills. When Julie says that she was “not recognised as a foreigner”, she seemed to point to wider issues of identity (Piller, 2002b).

My Spanish became excellent. It actually became fluent to the point where people actually could not tell the difference on the phone. People could not recognise me as a foreigner. So it became fluent but you see not bilingual. Never bilingual, but very fluent. (Julie, 2013, 1 207-210)

In the following quote, Julie highlights the importance of language input and the necessity to practise both languages on a regular basis to maintain a good level of language. Julie, who spoke English at work, believed that after her long stay in Venezuela her English was compromised because she had not practised English enough nor spoken with enough native English speakers.

... Whether they (Julie's colleagues) thought ... because I was dominant in my own language ... They also had not realised that I needed practice. They thought that native speakers don't need to practise their language. Nobody seemed to have registered that if you don't get the input, you lose it. (Julie, 2013, 1 239-243)

I just spoke to students in English. I actually did not know very many English-speaking people at all. So, my English was actually deteriorating because of the input I was getting... (Julie, 2013, 1 81-83)

Lastly, in her interview, Julie establishes a list of functionalities of bilingualism and defines bilingualism as “the ability to function socially and emotionally... hum, hum, linguistically equally well in two languages” (Julie, 2013, 1 21-22). This would suggest that for Julie, the social and emotional functionalities of language were as important as its linguistic functionality. For example, when she says, “I became very fluent because I talked

so much about my personal problems to friends” (Julie, 2013, 1 218), she seems to attribute her fluency in Spanish to a need to communicate (social functionality) about personal issues (emotional functionality).

To sum up, Julie’s experience shows that her motivation to learn a second language such as Spanish, that she did not really need, evolved with her changes in personal circumstances. Her experience also shows that levels of fluency/proficiency are extremely subjective. Julie, who had reflected on her own bilingualism and knew about the topic of bilingualism having recently studied the topic at university, seems to have very high expectation of language acquisition and bilingualism. For instance, Julie does not think she was bilingual because her Spanish was not equal to her English although she demonstrated that she could pass for a native Spanish of Spanish on the phone. At the same time, Julie talks about her need to keep practising her first language that was getting poorer because she did not speak English enough and had little contacts with native English-speakers. Julie also highlighted the social and emotional functionalities of language.

An interesting characteristic of Julie’s narrative on her language uses in Venezuela is the way Julie seems to have clearly compartmentalised her two main languages depending on the social context. At work, she used English exclusively even when her colleagues were communicating in Spanish. At home, she used English with her husband and children to cover all her needs including her emotional needs. And later on, she used Spanish to comment on her personal problems as will be seen in chapter eight.

#### **6.2.1.6. Linda’s experience in second language acquisition: a renewed motivation and a strong need to communicate**

Linda’s experience was another good example of the importance of motivation for language acquisition. In the following quote, Linda contextualises her experiences of second language acquisition. She describes how she overcame a first negative experience and found a renewed motivation to learn French as an adult when she moved to France with her English husband and her young daughter, Amy. In France, she was motivated to learn French because she felt a real need to communicate in her new environment. Her desire to acquire formal qualifications in French seems to be another factor that facilitated Linda’s acquisition of French. In the quote, Julie describes how she gained formal qualifications in French building on her previous knowledge of French. She was able to draw from some of the knowledge that she had actually acquired in school, which she called “background stored information”.



I failed at school and I dropped French, which you were not allowed to do but I was allowed to drop French. I was the first person at my school who was allowed to drop a foreign language... They were not going to put me through because I was too bad. So I didn't do French but I had this background stored information when I got there I realised that all those things I had learned like a parrot with no use were in there so the conjugation, the verb "quoi" or something would be in my head, when I started looking at it, it came up and so I learned by talking to people around me and then when I went to the Bordeaux International school I did French A-level there and I went to a few classes and I took the exam ... I did that and that was good, that was quite encouraging because, I know I lived in France, but it was very nice to get an A in the A-level and then after that I decided I would do, I would start the Open University ... and obviously, I liked talking so I had to find the words talking to people. I would always talk to neighbours and things. (Linda, 2014, 1 413-430)

So, unlike Julie, Linda comes across as a very pragmatic learner who talked to everyone. Linda also found an unusual way to practise her French. She did a therapy in that language. In the following quote, Linda talks about how she made progress in French in therapy because talking about herself was much more motivating than talking about some irrelevant topics that learners have to talk about formal learning.

And I went to therapy and that was in French. Obviously, he (the therapist) did have English so if I was to come up with a word, he would be able to say to me and then I would learn what the word was you know, so actually he helped me massively with my French... my French was quite poor. (Linda, 2014, 1 439-453)

Having a lesson in a foreign language about yourself is an interesting subject so it is quite motivating to actually find the word because it is actually about you. It is not, you are not learning about buses or tense or how the bank works, you are learning about you and your relationships and all of that so it is really motivating to learn. (Linda, 2014, 1 482-491)

Linda seems to have become an enthusiastic user of languages. In the following quote, she shows how she enjoyed playing with her two languages with her daughter. She was open to code-switching which she calls "mix and match". In the following quote, Linda explains how she enjoyed talking in what she called "Français".

What we used to do which was amazing, what we always did, was that we always did Français. And so there would be certain words that we didn't have, that didn't translate, so any words which didn't translate, we just used them whichever way we were speaking. So, we had things that couldn't be translated exactly, so you would just stick the French word in and so some words were best used from the other language and we would just mix and match really. (Linda, 2104, 1 301-306)

To sum up, Linda's experience was also very context dependent and shows that motivation seems essential to successful language acquisition. Having had a rather bad experience as a teenager, Linda persevered and acquired French as an adult when she really

needed to speak French. Linda had a strong desire to communicate with a maximum of people and she made the most of all the opportunities she had to speak French. Linda even made the most of a therapy that she did in French. However, Linda also believed in formal learning and her acquisition of qualifications in French seems to have motivated her to learn the language further.

#### **6.2.1.7. Andrea's experience of second language acquisition**

In her very short interview, Andrea, who was Mexican, did not really dwell on her experience of acquiring English when she moved to England with her English husband, Mike. Instead, she chose to talk about how she was determined to transmit her language and culture to her children. I retained her interview especially for what she said about transmitting her culture to her children.

#### **6.2.2. Summary of the parents' personal experiences of second language acquisition and bilingualism)**

The experiences of the participants were very diverse which would tend to show that experiences of second language acquisition and bilingualism are very individual and defy generalisation. In the study, Isabelle, Marc, Cristina, Julie and Linda, were very open about their experiences of bilingualism and they contextualised them very carefully, giving many details. Acquiring languages seemed to have a transformative influence on participants, like Isabelle and Marc, and to be psychologically rewarding especially at a young age. In their narratives, most participants gave evidence of an independent spirit and self-reliance about staying abroad to learn languages and starting new lives in other countries.

In the study, Isabelle and Marc talk a lot about their motivation to acquire languages that was often presented in terms of choice. Isabelle and Mark, who experienced childhood bilingualism, developed this aspect the most. From the data, it also seems that they both embraced familial bilingualism as normal. As adults, all the participants in the study chose to acquire the languages of the new countries they were moving to. Their bilingualism could be classified as elitist (De Mejia, 2002; Pavlenko, 2004; Guerrero, 2010). However, the value ascribed to their different languages was different. The participants who had acquired languages as children also seemed to have taken into account the value ascribed to those languages and this was particularly true of regional languages. Some participants needed to acquire languages more than others. English was clearly construed as a power language. Thus, a participant, like Julie, could take her time to acquire Spanish because she did not really need it, either at home or at work while Alain had more urgency to acquire

English because he needed it for work. Inversely, a regional language, such as Galician, had more of an emotional value.

The participants in the study had different conceptualizations of bilingualism and their views on what constitute fluency/proficiency were very different. All the participants in the study self-reported various forms of bilingualism ranging from receptive bilingualism to various degrees of fluency/proficiency. However, the participants in the study did not talk about being bilingual because they seemed to equate bilingualism with being able to speak two languages perfectly or equally well. If for some participants, the motivation to learn a second language was merely instrumental, for other participants, full mastery of the language was desirable. To acquire their second language, the participants had to be willing to make the most of all the opportunities they had to practise the language. Immersion in the language tended to facilitate the acquisition of the language. Moreover, the language input was important for the language acquisition of the participants although the quality of this input was questioned when it did not reflect the participants' expectations of the form of language they desired to acquire. As adults, most participants acquired their languages informally and some seemed quite proud of the fact that they had taught themselves the languages. Only Linda mentioned complementing her learning with formal learning. It seems that what counted most for the participants was the possibility to practise the new language with native speakers.

The language expectations of the participants who acquired languages as adults might seem more complex than the expectations of the participants who acquired languages as children. As adults, the participants seemed to be more conscious of their identity and of what they wanted to achieve socially with the new languages. There was evidence of a link between language and social identity in most narratives. In some cases, languages were also linked to national identities and participants could claim that they owned languages because they had been citizens of the countries in which the languages were spoken and, more importantly, they could pass their national identities on to their children.

It was useful for me to understand the background of the participants to try to understand their language ideologies and their family language policies. My findings aligned with the literature of bilingualism about the myths of perfect competence and balanced bilingualism (Grosjean, 2010; 2015), the literature of childhood bilingualism about input and exposure to language (De Houwer, 2015) and the literature of SLA about the transformative effect of second language acquisition (Kramsch, 2009; 2009b; 2015). The literature of language policies, about elitist bilingualism (De Mejia, 2002; King and Fogle, 2006; Guerrero, 2010) and the literature of language ideologies about ideologies

such as “the one nation, one language” of monolingual France (Kristeva, 1988; Piller, 2015) and “English as a global language” helped me to interpret the language beliefs of the participants.

In the next section, I look at the parents’ motivation to transmit their first languages to their children, as well as what the parent participants say about their children becoming bilingual.

### **6.3. The parents’ motivations to transmit their first languages to their children**

In this section, I examine what motivated the parent participants to transmit their first languages to their children. In the data, there were two main motivations, which were sometimes difficult to disentangle. Some participants talked about their need to transmit their first languages to their children. Their first languages were their languages for expressing emotions. Some participants also talked in terms of social capital (Bourdieu, 2001; 2009) They also seem to want to transmit their first languages as a skill that would equip their children to do well in life. In this section, I first examine some of the emotional aspects of transmitting first languages. Then, I examine what the parents and children say about languages as social and cultural assets.

Initially, most of the parents in the study seemed to share a need to speak their first languages to their children when their children were babies. And most parents said that it was natural for them to speak their first languages with their children because they perceived their first languages as being bound up with emotions. It was the language that came most easily and fluently to them.

The parents seemed to have felt a particular need to use their first languages when their children were very young. In the following quote, for example, Isabelle insists that she had to use her first language with her children because it is her “emotional language”. However, her insistence, when she says, “I’ve always said”, seems to suggest that it is a view that she has had to defend. In the quote, Isabelle also indicates that her husband shares the same emotional need to speak his first language to his children. Isabelle also seems to suggest that speaking their first languages to their children came naturally to them without a need for any planning. She uses the adverb “naturally” which is recurrent in my data.

I've always said that for me it was important to speak my language, that it was my emotional language that it was how I expressed what I felt and that I could not speak anything else to my children and it was the same for him (Andie). So, it happened naturally. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 87-90)

In the following quote, Cristina also uses the adverb “naturally” and clearly signals the emotive nature of the issue when she says that it “wouldn’t feel right” not to speak Spanish to her child. Additionally, Cristina uses other emotional terms such as “to feel”, “cuddling” and “cute”. Cristina points out that she could not speak any language other than Spanish to any young children, although she clearly states that she has no problems expressing herself in English. In the quote, Cristina refers to “habit” which could suggest that her emotional responses to very young children might have been conditioned by her upbringing in Spain and could thus be culturally acquired (Burkitt, 2014).

Yes, in some instances, I find that although in general, my working life, my personal life is mostly in English so that, it is fine. But when I speak to my child I don’t feel like speaking to him in English and when I speak to children, not if they are old enough but if they are babies, for example, I don’t have that habit of speaking in English. I just find that you naturally when you are cuddling, babies are being cute invariably, I feel like saying things to them in Spanish. (Cristina, 2012, 1 244-249)

Julie, another participant, presents her choice of language in terms of attachment. In the following quote, Julie explains that she chose to speak English to her son intentionally not because of her lack of skill in Spanish but because she needed to be able to “relate properly” with him. Like Isabelle who uses the term “always”, Julie uses “ever”, which seems to convey the inevitability of such choices.

It was a deliberate choice ... because my Spanish was so limited. We would not have been able to relate properly and of course, my son, I could only relate to my baby in English and I would only have ever wanted to. (Julie, 2013, 1 47-50)

The emotional need of the parents to relate to their children in their first languages often seem to go together with a need for reciprocity. The parents need their children to relate to them through the first languages. This can trigger strong emotional responses in the parents as in the case of Cristina. In the following quote, Cristina shows the intensity of her emotional response to hearing her son speak Spanish. Cristina describes her experience as “emotionally so emotional”. She compares her responses to her son speaking in English. It seems that for Cristina the issue of language transmission is very complex and that her very strong emotional response is very much tied to issues of national identity, something that surprises her as she says that she had not worried about her identity previously.

I didn’t think that it would be emotionally so emotional because I had never questioned am I Spanish, am I Galician? Who am I? It was not something that had ever worried me my identity so the fact that I have developed all these strong

feelings when Tommy speaks in English I feel very happy but when he repeats what I have said in Spanish I am so happy!!! That I cannot express it and I did not expect that I would feel so strongly about it. I thought I would feel strongly because it is important that he speaks Spanish. His family only speaks Spanish. He needs to speak to his grandfather but I never thought it would be so emotional for me the fact that this last week he has been repeating what I said in Spanish, how much happier I was and it was not something that had occurred to me when I started. (Cristina, 2012, 1 508-517)

In Isabelle's case, her response to hearing her children speak to her in English rather than French triggered sadness, an emotion that she says she could not control. In the following quote, Isabelle talked about this emotional response. Isabelle seems to have interpreted her children's use of English, as a sign that they did not care about her emotional needs (Tannen, 1986; 2001). She reports that when her children failed to speak French to her, she felt the need to talk to them about the sadness that this made her feel. And for an outsider, like the friend Isabelle cites in the quote, this could be perceived as an over-reaction on Isabelle's part. Isabelle's friend seems to have been alarmed at Isabelle's insistence that her children always spoke French to their mother. Isabelle reports that her friend used the word "blackmail". Thus, Isabelle's friend might have perceived Isabelle as being rather controlling in her approach. It seems that Isabelle's friend thought that Isabelle should focus more on what the children had to say rather than on their choice of language.

I had no choice if the children did not speak French to me; sometimes I would tell them that I was sad when I never heard French. The emotional side of the language, I've always talked to them about it, and I even remember that once a friend criticised me for it. She said to me, "you know you should be careful because your children when they have a message, it is the message that is important not the language in which they say it. If you say emotional things it is like blackmail". (Isabelle, 2011, 1 411-417)

It is interesting to contrast what Isabelle's daughter, Sophie, has to say about Isabelle's attitude. In the following quote, Sophie, confirms that she had felt somehow coerced into speaking French with her mother because her mother used very persuasive arguments. One of them, according to Sophie, was that the children would regret not speaking French. However, what the children would regret is not explicitly said.

And that for us if we don't speak French, one day we will regret it, and then I don't know, yeah I think it is important that we understand this reason. (Sophie, 2012, 1 200-202)

In the following quote, Isabelle tries to explain the reason why she needed her children to speak French. However, her explanation seems rather complex and it is difficult to disentangle language and emotion. Isabelle presents her need to share French with her

children because she used French to explain her emotions and she needed the children to understand her emotions precisely. Otherwise, her children could misunderstand her emotions and might misinterpret them and thus feel bad about them. According to Isabelle, they could feel “guilty” about them. Isabelle presents her rationale in terms of honesty. She wanted to “be honest with” her children. However, there is some ambiguity in Isabelle’s quote when she talks about a “matter of language”. In the quote, she reports that for her children, the issue had become emotional and that her children had developed a need to talk to her in French.

But for me, if I have emotions it is important that I explain them to my children because if I do not explain them they will feel them all the same, they will explain them to themselves and maybe their explanations will be false, and they may feel guilty and not know how they can change that so that ultimately it was just a matter of language, a case of sharing something with me and I think for them it has become an emotional thing and now sometimes they need to hear the language, need to talk to me, to have a little time with me alone in which we can speak French. Anyway, I think that we always transmit emotional stuff to one’s children but it is better to be honest about it. (Isabelle, 2011, p 418-428)

In the following quote, Sophie seems very understanding of her mother’s emotional needs. However, instead of developing the emotional aspect of sharing a first language, Sophie points out the importance of sharing the same culture. For Sophie, both language and culture seem valid at an emotional level. When Sophie says “at least”, she seems to say that sharing her mother’s French culture might compensate for not speaking French all the time with her.

And then, I understand because she is also French and if she is hearing English all the time, that her children speak English all the time with her, it's less, I don't know, personal maybe. At least, we share her culture. (Sophie, 2012, 1 202-204)

However, in another quote, Sophie also reflects that her emotional language might be French because it is based on intimacy and she is very close to her mother. Sophie talks about the close rapport she has with her father noting that she shares his sense of humour.

I think that emotionally perhaps in French because I share more things with my mother, because she's my mummy and if I want to talk to her about boys or stuff like that since we speak in French, I think that this type of emotions it would be in French but I tell jokes in English with my father. (Sophie, 2012, 1 69-72)

Lastly, Linda’s experience shows that once an emotional language has been established it is difficult to change that language. In the following quote, Linda, who now lives in England and would like to practise her French with her adult daughter reports that Amy, who has moved back to France, is very ambivalent about speaking in French with

her mother. According to Linda, it seems that her daughter, who was mothered in English, finds it hard to dissociate English, the language she was mothered in, and mothering.

She will never talk to me in French, I mean... I'll ask her, can we talk in French and she will go, no. If I got her online, so I say can you help me with my French, can we talk? I've got to try some Skype and you can talk to me in French, but no she won't so she will never do that with me and obviously, she is teaching English, she is teaching Spanish, she could quite easily talk to me in French but no. She's put me in a box and I am away you know. (Linda, 2014, 1 510-519)

So, she wants me to speak French but she doesn't, you know, it's, I don't know, I don't know whether it is the mother part or which part is, mother and all in a one parent family where she wants to make her distance or how much of it is the bilingual, bilingual part. (Linda, 2014, 1 55-558)

Another motivation of the parents was to facilitate the communication of their children with their extended families. Most of the parents in the study wanted their children to be able to communicate with their grandparents who lived abroad. They wanted their children to be able to establish emotional bonds with their own parents and other members of their families. Cristina, for example, regularly visited her widowed father and the rest of her family in Spain. She wanted her son to be able to communicate with his grandfather in a language that her father would understand and be at ease with. The only way for Cristina's son to communicate with his grandfather was to acquire Galician as well as Spanish as she explained in the two following quotes. In the quote, Cristina talks in terms of obligation. For Cristina, her son "needed" to acquire the two languages spoken in her native hometown.

I never considered my child not speaking Spanish because all my family speaks Spanish. My mother is dead but his grandfather, he only speaks Spanish and the Galician language so he needs to understand his maternal family. He needs to speak Spanish. It was never a question but we did discuss how, the practicalities. (Cristina, 2012, 1 32-36)

Well, my father speaks only Galician to my son just because he does not, he is a native Galician speaker and because of his education he is not, he will try to speak Spanish but he will revert to Galician..., for my father it is an effort to speak Spanish and to keep speaking in Spanish. (Cristina, 2012, 1 31-35)

In the following quote, Andrea, who spoke Spanish with her children, reports that it was essential for her children to speak Spanish because it would enable them to communicate with their extended family in Mexico. In addition, Andrea herself may relocate to Mexico with her English family.

Well, I decided to do it (have bilingual children) because some of my family members don't speak English and I always wanted to go back to Mexico. It has always been my dream to go back... (Andrea, 2011, 1 93-95)



Two fathers highlighted the responsibility of parents to transmit the heritage languages. Mike, Andrea's husband, gave his views on how important it was for him that his children could communicate with their extended family. In the following quote, Mike says that for him it was sad that some other children were unable to speak with their grandparents. Mike highlights that for him, it is indeed the responsibility of parents to transmit the heritage languages to enable children to communicate with their extended families.

I am just happy that they can speak both languages because it is; we've got lots of friends whose children don't speak Spanish. I think that is a little bit sad when their grandparents come over and maybe one of the children, normally the older can speak Spanish and the rest of them can't. I think that is a little bit sad. ...it must be sad for a grandmother to not been able to speak to their grandchildren in their own language. It must be a little bit hard because you would have thought that the daughter or son, whichever it was, would have taught their children to speak their language, at least to some extent. (Mike, 2011, 1 101-110)

On the other hand, Alain lamented that his English son-in-law was not supporting his grandchildren's bilingual development. In the following quote, Alain, like Mike, makes comparisons with other families he knows and reveals his disappointment at his grandchildren not speaking French. Although Alain does not directly talk about his emotions, he uses emotional expressions like "it is a pity" or "it's wonderful" that reveal the emotional charge of language transmission. Incidentally, Mike and Alain's views also show how bilingual parents take account of the behaviour of other families in their community. They can observe and compare themselves to other bilingual families.

No, he [my son-in-law] does not speak a word of French [he does not want to learn French?] No. [Not particularly] He is an English man (Ah, Ah, Ah, Ah). I think one day when they (the grandchildren) realise that it is useful. But it's a pity because I see so many families, I have seen the children being born and I see them now, they are fluent in both languages, there is a girl who lives behind who speaks two languages fluently German, English and French. It's wonderful... (Alain, 2013, 1 239-244)

It seems that the issue of transmission was equally important for the participants of the second generation. In the following quote, Sophie, Isabelle's daughter, explains that her mother's language is very important to her and that she is thinking of transmitting it to the next generation. As it no longer serves a real communicative need in Sophie's family, French thus seems to be desirable at an emotional level since the purpose of the transmission is presented as enabling the new generation to communicate at an emotional level with Isabelle because Isabelle is fluent in English. In addition, Sophie raises interesting questions of identity and authenticity when she reflects that it might be harder

for her generation to transmit her mother's first language because Sophie is not a native speaker like her mother.

I would like my children to speak French because it would be good that they could speak with their French grandmother in French but I know, because in my life at the moment I speak more English, I can see that if I speak to them in English sometimes it would not work. The only way it worked for us, is that my mother has always insisted on speaking French to us and it was easy for her because she was really French. She is not English; she did not speak English as well when we were young so I guess I'd have to be very careful that I really speak to them only in French so it would be something that would really need to be decided then and it depends on who I get married to as well. If I marry a Frenchman, then fine I can speak to them in English and French. (Sophie, 2012, 1 179-190)

In the last quote, Sophie seems to be questioning her authenticity as a French person when she compares herself to her mother who she described as "really" French. Sophie seems interested in adopting the same approach as her mother (one parent – one language approach) but questions the feasibility of using this approach because she is not dominant in French. However, Sophie is rather flexible in her thinking and comments that she will adjust her plans according to the nationality of the father of her children. This, in turn, raises intriguing questions about the influence of a bilingual upbringing on the choice of partners of the children on the second generation.

Sophie further raises issues of bilingual identity when she talks about her sister's plan to transmit French to her children. In the following quote, Sophie reiterates that as a bilingual, her sister would find it hard to use only one language. In addition, Sophie evokes the extra task of preparing partners to the task of raising bilingual children.

Now, her French is very good, but because she lives in London now, she has a job, she speaks less in French and when she comes back, she wants to speak French with my mother and me because she speaks less in French. She tries to teach her boyfriend to speak French too (Ah, Ah) because I think that, like me, she thinks that it is important that if she has children someday they also speak French and as she is bilingual, it is difficult for her to speak to them only in French as my mother did because she has both languages. (Sophie, 2012, 1 103-109)

In short, most parents in the study considered it natural to use their first languages with their very young children. Parents often considered their first languages as emotional. It was the languages that enabled them to bond with their children. Most parents in the study wanted their children to be able to bond with their grandparents and extended family abroad. While parents experienced strong positive emotions when their children spoke their first languages, they could express some sadness if the children failed to use the language. Once an emotional language was established, it seemed difficult to change that language.

Interestingly, the second generation of bilinguals was planning to transmit the first languages of their parents and that shows the importance that these languages had for them. However, the second generation had practical worries about the feasibility of transmitting a language that they were not dominant in and that might be unknown to their future partners.

When talking about language transmission, it was common for the participants to compare their family to other families. The families positioned themselves in society as bilingual families.

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined how a small group of parents became bilingual and went on to raise bilingual families. I started by examining the parents individually and showed that their experiences of bilingualism were quite diverse because they had different family backgrounds and had acquired languages in very different contexts. Therefore, my data shows that it is not desirable to generalise such experiences.

To start with, the parents' knowledge of bilingualism showed a reliance on myths of bilingualism although information on bilingualism is now more easy to access (Grosjean, 2010; 2015). This reliance seemed to influence how the participants perceived their own bilingualism. Julie, for example, did not believe that she could call herself bilingual because she was expecting to be equally competent in her two languages (Grosjean, 1982). This shows how prevalent the myths of bilingualism still are and how bilinguals themselves are not immune to them. Most of the parents' participants insisted they were not bilinguals although they had all acquired second languages. To acquire these languages, they had benefited from immersion in languages through being brought up in bilingual families or living abroad. This would tend to support theories of childhood bilingualism about the importance for children to be exposed to the languages they need to learn and get a consistent input in these languages (De Houwer, 2005; 2007; 2009a; 2009b; 2014; 2015). The importance of exposure and motivation was also highlighted for young adults like Julie who blame her slow progress in Spanish to be underexposed to the variety of Spanish she aspired to learn and her subsequent issue with attrition in English to not getting enough input in that language.

The examination of the parents' experiences also showed that the desire to acquire languages and later to transmit languages was very context-sensitive and based on communicative needs. It was also value-laden. This would tend to support the need to examine language ideologies because they seem to be indeed "interested, multiple, and

contested” (Woolard, 1992, p.4). My data showed that for the participants languages were chosen and brought up issues of power, status, and prestige (Baker, 2001, Fell, 2012). Therefore, languages were not neutral (Piller, 2002a, Pavlenko, 2003). Through the example of a regional language like Galician, Cristina showed how the value of languages can change and how this value affects the motivation to acquire a language. While she seemed to have resisted learning Galician as a child because it was not a valued language, she expected her son to learn it because the circumstances had changed.

In the data, there was also evidence of a desire for language and a belief that language could be transformative. This supports Kramsch’s views (2009; 2012c) that learning another language is part of personal growth and improvement and that SLA learners have a desire for language that goes beyond the mere cognitive learning of a second language as second languages may help them to construct new social identities. However, and paradoxically, it seems that the main motivation for the parents in my study to raise their children bilingually had to do with wanting to use their first languages with their children and retain their first language identity. The parent participants explained that they considered their first language as emotional and thus found it natural to use their first language with their very young children to try to establish a natural emotional bond (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). In addition, most parents in the study also wanted their children to be able to bond with their grandparents and extended family abroad. This emotional need is supported by the literature of bilingualism that examine the emotional bonds that bilingual families formed with both their cultural communities (Pavlenko, 2004; 2008a; Piller, 2000; 2001; Okita, 2002; Mills, 2004). In the field of language family policy, language maintenance in bilingual families is also recognised as complex and emotionally loaded because it affects both parents and children not only linguistically but psychologically and emotionally (King and Fogle, 2006). The participants of the second generation were also planning to transmit the first languages of their parents to their children and that shows the importance that these languages had for them at an emotional as well as practical level although the second generation came across as less confident that they could really transmit those languages because they did not consider them as their first languages. In this, my data seem to support Fishmans’ (1991; 2001) that the base of language maintenance is intergenerational although at the same time it seems to contradict Fishman’s controversial three generation traditional theory (1991; 2001) according to which by the third generation, the families become monolingual. Therefore, my research aligns with new research highlighting that in certain populations there is a desire to

maintain the language to accommodate significant others such as grand-parents (Spolsky, 2012).

In short, my data on the parents' beliefs and understanding of familial bilingualism did not indicate that parents had adopted a conscious family language policy to start with. Instead, they just seemed to have drifted into a form of "one parent, one language" approach out of a need to speak first languages because it was natural to them. In the next chapter, I examined the strategies used by the parents to try to maintain their heritage languages.

## Chapter seven

### **The parents' challenges and issues in developing bilingual families and family language policies**

What happens if your child hits another child in the playground and you have to tell them off while checking that another child is OK and convincing the parents of the other child that you are doing your job? So suddenly you end up speaking to different audiences. (Cristina, 2012, 1 375-379)

#### **7.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I first examine the strategies that the parent participants used to help their children become bilingual. From their account, it seems that one of the main strategies that the parent participants chose naturally to help their children acquire their two languages was a form of “one parent, one language” approach. Some families also chose to adopt the heritage language as the common language of the family. Next, I examine the efforts of the parent participants to provide input in two languages to their children. To finish, I look at how the parent participants dealt with their children’s formal education because some parents relied on school to provide language input and schools played a part in the children’s choice of language.

#### **7.2. Developing childhood bilingualism in the home environments**

##### **7.2.1. The use of the “one parent, one language” approach**

As I showed in the last chapter, most parents in the study initially opted to speak their first languages to their children because they had a strong emotional significance. These first languages, or heritage languages, were the languages through which the parents felt most comfortable to relate to with their children and the parents described their uses as natural. Therefore, most parents initially and naturally adopted the strategy known as the “one parent, one language” approach. They aimed at speaking their first languages only with their children so that the latter grew up acquiring the languages of each parent. In this approach, the two languages of the parents are clearly defined as being different and the parents as speaking different languages (Baker, 2011).

Isabelle’s family adopted this approach. Isabelle, who was a French speaker, and Andie, who was an English speaker, spoke English together but tacitly decided to speak

their respective first languages with their children. In the last chapter, Isabelle reported that this was the approach that felt most “natural” to them because both she and her husband felt the same need to speak their first language to their children.

I've always said that for me it was important to speak my language, that it was my emotional language that it was how I expressed what I felt and that I could not speak anything else to my children and it was the same for him (my husband). So, it happened naturally. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 84-87)

The adoption of the “one parent, one language” approach meant that Isabelle’s children used French at home with their mother while they spoke English with their father. They also spoke English with the wider community. Moreover, as they lived in English-speaking countries most of their lives, French became the heritage language of the family.

However, sticking to the “one parent, one language” approach seems to have been challenging for most of the families in the study. In the following quote, for example, Isabelle explains that Andie started to speak French when his children were young because he wanted to feel more included in the life of his family.

He (Isabelle’s husband) learned French when we had the children because it was me who looked after the children. I only spoke to them in French and so he did not want to be excluded so he learned French. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 79-81)

The last quote shows that the strategies that the parents adopted could change depending on life circumstances and were therefore flexible. The following quote also shows that it is important for the parents to be flexible. In the quote, Cristina comments on how she is helping her husband, Steve, to acquire more Spanish. This also represents a change of common language in the couple. However, Cristina’s focus seems to be on helping her son gain more input of Spanish at home.

My husband understands Spanish. His Spanish is good but he only started learning it when he met me. So, I speak to my son in Spanish all the time in any circumstances. To my husband, I used to speak to him in English but now I am trying also to speak Spanish to him at home, so just Tommy gets more exposure and it is good for my husband’s Spanish too. (Cristina, 2012, 1 22-26)

Cristina also talks about the importance for the parents to support each other. In the following quote, Cristina’s use of “we” seems meant to convey the couple’s common determination that Cristina continues to use Spanish exclusively with her son. Cristina remarks on how she has tried to adopt a textbook approach of the “one parent, one language” method by speaking to her son in Spanish whatever the circumstances.

So, I try to speak only Spanish to him even if I have to repeat things in Spanish and in English because if there are visitors and I speak English then I find that I am the only person that consistently speak Spanish to him. So I felt, we felt, that it was important, that it had to be all the time and it did not matter who was there. (Cristina, 2012, 1 38-44)

In the last quote, Cristina raises the issue of using the “one parent, one language” approach outside the home and the difficulty of sticking to the method in some social situations. In such situations, Cristina says that she usually reverts to translating into English what she says in Spanish to her son (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). Thus, it could be suggested that the adoption of the “one parent, one language” approach results in an extra effort for Cristina. In the following quote, Cristina offers an example of the complexity of managing certain social situations when parenting a bilingual child. Cristina evokes the potential situation of having to reprimand her son in Spanish in the playground while at the same time checking that the other child is OK and convince others that she is doing a credible job as a mother.

What happens if your child hits another child in the playground and you have to tell them off while checking that another child is OK and convincing the parents of the other child that you are doing your job? So suddenly you end up speaking to different audiences. (Cristina, 2012, 1 375-379)

In the last quote, Cristina seems to worry about her credibility as a bilingual mother. She talks hypothetically about a situation in which a bilingual parent might be observed reprimanding her/his child in the heritage language while also having to use the dominant language to reassure an audience that s/he is doing a good job as a parent. Kramsch, (2006) remarks that some utterances, called performatives, such as the one used to reprimand children, “show the ritualistic power of language to bring about social realities” (ibid. p.106). When Cristina talks about “speaking for different audiences”, she does seem to talk about “performing” her role of mother.

In short, managing the “one parent, one language” approach – an approach that responds to the emotional needs of the parents to speak their first languages to their children - seems to be a source of concern for some parents as well as a source of extra work. The “one parent, one language” approach seems difficult to stick to in families in which the parent speaking the heritage language spends more time with the children because the heritage language tends to take over at home and the parent of the dominant language may feel isolated if s/he speaks another language. In this case, some parents shift strategies and adopt the heritage language as the common language of the families. This was reported to have happened in Isabelle and Cristina’s families. The fathers who at first had spoken



English, their first language, to their children started to speak their wife's languages (French and Spanish) learning those languages alongside their children. As a result, it can be deduced that the children also stopped or received limited input in their father's first language. Lastly, neither Isabelle nor Cristina seems to question the quality of the extra input provided by their husbands speaking a second language. It seems that Cristina values the quantity of Spanish that her son received. Lastly, speaking a heritage language in public may mean that the family may feel more exposed than a monolingual family and might risk being scrutinised by others.

### **7.2.2. The adoption of the heritage language as the common language of the families**

The adoption of the heritage language as the common language of the families was complex because of the history of each parent, their proficiency in their second language and the value they attached to languages.

Marc and his wife, Anne, lived in England and spoke French together. Marc's first language was French and Anne was bilingual, English and French. In the following quote, Marc recalls that he had discussed with Anne the languages that they would speak to their children. It seems interesting to me that Marc and Anne who were already using French together felt the need to discuss what language they would speak as a family. This seems to suggest that choosing which language to speak to their children was not as straightforward as it appears. It might have involved other factors than the emotional need and naturalness of speaking one's language to one's children that most participants talked about. However, Marc and Anne's case also shows how complex the choice of language could be for parents who had been raised bilingually themselves.

The decision we took when we had a child, we said, OK, what language are we going to speak to him? Do we speak to him in French and in English, in both, we mix it all, what do we do? How do we do it? My wife is half-French, half-English. She speaks French very well. My wife speaks French very well even though she makes mistakes too, rather funny ones... She lived in France when she was young, all her youth with her grandmother. So, we speak in French. (Marc, 2014, 1 225-233)

Interestingly, in the last quote, Marc does not present his wife as bilingual but as someone who speaks French very well but makes some mistakes. Thus, it seems that for Marc, the fact that Anne is half-French and lived in France when she was young does not make her necessarily bilingual. It is not clear whether Mark conceptualises Anne's bilingualism in terms of the length of time that Anne spent in France. Marc seems to view his wife's bilingualism differently from his son's, Hadrien. When he talked about Hadrien's

bilingualism, in the last chapter, Section 6.2., Marc seemed to assume that his son would be good at languages and grow up bilingual because “it is his language, normal” (Marc, 2014, 1 136) thus linking bilingualism and genealogy.

Like Marc’s family, Julie’s family spoke the heritage language at home. However, in Julie’s case, the adoption of a common language for the family seems to be about power. Julie and her husband, Ramiro, spoke English together and opted to speak English as the family’s common language although they lived in Venezuela, a country whose dominant language is Spanish. However, they did not discuss this choice of languages. Ramiro was the only parent in the study who was reported as not wanting to speak his first language, which was Spanish, with his children. In the following quote, Julie reports that Ramiro attributed a high status to English, which seemed to be tied up with issues of social identity and, in a rather specific way, national identity when she says that the whole English-speaking set up might have been considered quite “statusful” in Venezuela. The last line of the quote suggests that Ramiro wanted to continue a family tradition and create a special English-speaking environment for his family. However, Ramiro’s quest for an English family identity may seem a bit extreme and isolating. Julie refers to her home in Venezuela as being a foreign land: “This is English land”.

He was very proud of the English. And that sort of fitted in because his father came over to England in 1952 from Colombia and he still spoke English until he died ...so for the whole family this speaking English was an important thing... he was quite pleased to speak English. I think he was quite pleased with the whole English-speaking set up. I think it was possibly considered to be quite “statusful”. We never discussed it but you know, on reflexion, I think that you know speaking English at home was a bit special ... We never spoke Spanish at home. It was almost like a consulate situation. Here we are. This is English land. (Julie, 2013, 1 68-79)

In short, if initially, the choice of the languages of the parents had appeared simple because it was based on the parents’ emotional need to speak their first languages to their children as examined in chapter four, the choice evolved and was sometimes more complex as it involved issues of identity and social status. A language like English could be seen as more valuable and drive the parents’ choice of the language spoken at home.

### **7.2.3. Language input and output**

#### **7.2.3.1. Estimating the language input provided in the home environments**

To facilitate their children bilingual language acquisition, the parents in the study had to provide their children with sufficient input in two languages. However, there were

times in the lives of the families when balancing this input proved difficult. For example, the quantity of input could become an issue when parents were unable to spend much time with the children. In the data, both Alain and Marc reflected that they did not give enough language input to their children because of their work commitments. In the following quote, Alain reports that he was not able to spend enough time with his daughter, Laurie, because of work but that the family tried to compensate for this by providing Laurie with French au pairs.

Yes, but in catering, you are never in, huh. I would only see her when I was taking her to school in the morning. Every morning, it was my thing, I would take her to school and would collect her in the afternoon, but from 6 pm, I was at work, I was never seeing her in the evenings. So, we had quite a few French au pairs and yes when she was 3 years old, 3-4 years, I was teaching her words all the same, nose, eyes, mouth, all that she knew, all that. (Alain, 2013, 1 129-134)

In the last quote, Alain seems to conceive language learning as a process of learning discrete vocabulary items, and using games that one might use with a very young child learning their first language.

It was sometimes difficult for the family to judge the quantity of language input that they were giving at home. In the following quote, Marc remarks that although his family and in particular his wife, Anne, tried to provide enough input in French, there were times when Anne would tell stories in English. As a result, according to Marc, the children were acquiring more vocabulary in English.

And so, the children, we speak French to them at home or now, if my son was to come in, I would speak to him in French. I wouldn't speak to him in English, I would speak to him in French ... he [Hadrien] doesn't have as much vocabulary in French as he has in English because we often read them stories in English. It is often my wife who reads stories to them in English. I read him stories from time to time in French but it is rare in fact. So, I should do a bit more (Marc, 2014, 1 237-246)

### **7.2.3.2. Maximising the language input by diversifying the sources of input**

The work environment of the parents in the study seemed to play a significant part in providing additional input of heritage languages to the children. The immersion of the children in the language that their parents used at work often seemed to have a positive impact on their linguistic as well as cultural development. Three families reported working in catering and using the heritage language at work. Other parents used to work as language teachers in the school their children attended.

In the following quote, Alain, who works in a French café, explains that the common characteristic of his staff is to speak French. According to Alain, this has enabled his daughter, Laurie, and his grandchildren to be immersed in the French language when they visit the café.

When I opened the restaurant, it was a French restaurant so I employed French people and I spoke only in French ... Here, it's been eighteen years... We have always had French people here. Yes, there are lots of French who stop by, a lot of my customers speak French and I still employ French people. (Alain, 2013, 1 293-303)

Alain also explained that working at the café has provided Laurie with an incentive to speak the language although she does not normally speak French with her father. Here again, Alain uses the adverb “naturally” to describe the difficulties Laurie has to speak spontaneously in French.

- Does Laurie continue to speak to you in French?

- Here, because she works with us. So, she has a lot of opportunity to speak French but it does not come naturally to her, that, so she does it but it's not ... (Alain, 2013, p 198-201)

In the following quote, Linda reports that getting a new job in an international boarding school in which her daughter was immersed in English after school might have helped her daughter Amy to persevere with English at a time when Amy, who was attending a French school, was probably becoming dominant in French.

She started to get lazy [speaking in English] and going to the International school helped because ... in the evenings, she would be with the English children in the boarding unit, she mixed with. They were all older than her. So, she would speak English to them and a lot of them didn't speak French. So, she had to do English and I spoke English all evening. (Linda, 2014, 1 96-100)

Additionally, Amy seems to have benefitted from attending her mother's English classes. The classes enabled Amy to acquire some of the cultural knowledge that young English children acquire growing up in England. It might be suggested that being used as a role model, by her mother, was very gratifying and probably benefitted Amy psychologically. In addition, experiencing how English was valued in France might have motivated Amy to continue to use English, which was her first language.

So, she had to come with me on those days mostly. And she was my stooge (ha, ha). she came to all the lessons and joined in with all the kids and she was the role-model. So, I don't think she disliked it. She quite liked it with the children... so I always thought she wouldn't be good at it if she hadn't had that practice from young

repeating things and doing things and how to set it up and everything ... I used to make little musicals with English songs that were adapted and things like, Jake and the Bean, whatever, Snow white and the seven dwarfs, with songs, typical English songs ... and then the mums and dads would be coming to watch it. So, she sort of took part in those things. I think she didn't mind. (Linda, 2014, 1 529-548)

In short, when the children were very young, some parents had to compromise to accommodate both their children's needs in terms of language input and their own emotional needs in terms of feeling included in the bilingual family. The children tended to spend more time with the mother and it was difficult for the father to provide enough input of the heritage language. Some parents had to change their approach to language acquisition. They started to speak their spouses' languages to feel more included and to increase the children's input of language. Language input was difficult to balance and assess. Assessing the input provided to the children in the families in terms of quantity and quality could be problematic. In some cases, the work environment of the parents was a good source of additional input. My data supports theories of childhood bilingualism about the importance of being exposed to two languages and get a consistent input in these languages (De Houwer, 2005; 2007; 2009; 2009b; 2014; 2015). Further, in her studies on early bilingual development, De Houwer (2007; 2014; 2015) demonstrates the importance of the quantity of language input for very young bilingual children in the home environment. She also points out that parents often underestimate the quantity of input they provide (ibid. 2015). In addition, De Houwer states that an interruption of input may have a detrimental effect on the whole family (De Houwer, 2009b). On the other hand, the OPOL approach which needs a lot of dedication (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004) does not necessarily result in active bilingualism (Romaine, 1995) and is often swapped for a more flexible approach because of its demanding nature (De Houwer, 2013). For Lanza (2004), parents often use more than one language in their interactions to include dominant language speakers and this approach seems to be one of the most frequently used approaches (De Houwer, 2009b).

### **7.2.3.3. Monitoring the children's language output**

Having provided their children with language input in the heritage languages, the parents in the study talked about monitoring their children's output and prompting the children to use the heritage language. Thus, ensuring that the children were developing bilingually represented extra efforts for some parents in the study. In the following quote, Isabelle reports that to ensure that her children used French, whenever her children spoke

in English, she would ask them to reformulate or systematically reformulate for them in French.

But when the children were little, they would tell something in English that I knew they could say in French, I would say to them "Sorry? "And that made them repeat or otherwise if I was seeing that they did not manage it, I would repeat what they had just said in French. But it was a strategy that I had used naturally because it seemed to me the way ... (Isabelle 1, 2011, 1 119-123)

Mike reports that in his family, their mother, Andrea, would ignore the children if they did not speak Spanish to her. However, Mark also comments on the futility of the task, as his children were able to rebel by using English instead of Spanish.

They always speak in English in England. All the time. To each other and everything. They never spoke in Spanish to each other. [They speak Spanish to Andrea?] To Andrea, they do, ya. ...but they do sometimes reply to her in English. Occasionally. But she won't listen to them if they do because they like the easy option. She will ask to go and get a brush and they will run upstairs and come back saying "here is your brush". (Mike, 2011, 1 42-43, 1 48-50)

In the following quote, Marc reveals that his children were encouraged to speak in French. When talking about the issue, Marc uses strong terms such as "to stop" and "to force" that show the controlling nature of the task and its difficulty. However, Marc concedes that his children's inability to express themselves in French was probably due to their lack of vocabulary in that language.

They speak to each other in English. But we must force them to speak French. So, they have to be stopped, "no, in French, in French, in French". And sometimes it happens, they speak French, a little bit and suddenly, "bam" they continue in English. If there is a word they do not find in French, then they'll find it in English. (Marc, 2014, 1 264-268)

Parents reported issues arising from code-switching. When the children started school, they started to mix their two languages or use the culturally dominant language at home. In the following quote, Marc reports that his son has trouble when speaking French at home because he is becoming dominant English, the language he hears in school all day long. Marc explains that Hadrien has difficulties when he talks with his father about school in French because he does not have sufficient vocabulary in French.

But it is true that like him (Hadrien), they are used to speaking English at school and this and that. When he wants to tell me something, he is going to say it in English. And I say to him, "no, no, speak to me in French" and it's a little bit harder for him to tell me the same story in French because he does not have as much vocabulary in French than he has in English... (Marc, 2014, 1 240-244)

This also affects Marc's youngest child, Emma, who used to be a keen French speaker, because she is immersed in English at nursery school. The example is interesting as it shows that the tendency to use the dominant language for school-age children can affect any child independently of his/her interest or initial level of fluency in the heritage language.

Even Emma. Emma, she speaks a lot in English right now although she was the one who always spoke French. Now she has stopped, she is speaking in English a lot since she started school. (Marc, 2014, 1 255-257)

Andrea also reports that her children reverted to English after they started school. Her use of "as they do" seems to suggest that it is commonly accepted that young bilinguals end up adopting the dominant language of school.

And the little one is 12 and he spent one year in Mexico, Oh, no, no, no he spent one year when he was 2 or 3. So in fact, his first language was Spanish, not English. And then, he learned English in school but then as they do, they stopped talking their first language and they start talking English. (Andrea, 2011, 1 36-40)

For her part, Linda provides an example of how her daughter alternated between being dominant in French and English because of changes of life circumstances and her own negotiation of identity. Linda explains that after her divorce, she moved houses and started giving English classes. The changes in family circumstances seem to have affected the language that Amy used with her mother. Interestingly, Linda reports that it seems that Amy was ambivalent about her mother speaking French and attributes this to parent attachment.

I suppose I was being much more English, teaching English and things, very English. And she then started the French, I suppose when we went to the town. She came all French. And then obviously when we lived in the other town. Obviously throughout she would join in. She talked to me in French then. So, if I met some other people or go anywhere in the shops or anywhere I would be talking French, she (Ah) she talked French. And then I used to sometimes talk to her in English in the shops. She wouldn't mind doing obviously, a few words because they couldn't understand. That was it really, you know, so that was it yeah. And obviously, I did, so she wants me to speak French but she doesn't, you know. It's, I don't know, I don't know whether it is the mother part or which part is, mother and all in a one parent family where she wants to make her distance or how much of it is the bilingual, bilingual part. (Linda, 1. 526-558, pp.15-16)

In short, monitoring the children's language output was an extra task for the parents in the study. This task appeared to be dealt with in a relatively controlling way. The strategies used by the parent participants to encourage their children to speak in the heritage language were based on reformulations as well as regular reminders of the language to use.

It could be argued that this might have had the potential to suppress spontaneous communication between the parents and the children and lead to issues of communication. The control that parents can exert on bilingual children is documented in the literature of bilingual language planning. It includes choosing the school environment (Curd-Christiansen, 2013) in order to influence the children's language socialization and the language used in the families (Spolsky, 2009). However, like in my data, research shows that parental authority and control is not sufficient to guarantee the development of children's bilingualism (Kirsch, 2012). Parental consistency in implementing policies, children's age, and support from the societal and educational context are also required (Döpke, 1998; Lanza, 2007). There were key stages in the lives of the children such as starting school where the balance of languages tended to tilt towards the dominant language of school. Children found it hard not to code-switch because they lacked vocabulary in the heritage language. This phase in childhood bilingual development is well documented in studies on language input (De Houwer, 2005; 2007; 2009; 2009b; 2014; 2015) about the importance for bilingual children to get a consistent input which should be diverse and appropriate in both their languages (De Houwer, 1999b). The working environment of the parents was sometimes used to rebalance the input of languages. In addition, changes of family circumstances could affect language input and the language used by the children. In addition, in English-speaking nations which rarely support bilingualism and bilingual education, it has been shown that the ideology of English as a global language may hinder the development of other languages and result in children becoming passive bilinguals (Spolky, 2004) because bilingual children tend to use English with their siblings and peers rather than the heritage language (Shin, 2005). Lastly, it has also been shown that when they grow older, bilingual children may find it difficult to live with the demands and expectations of one culture in the home and another at school (Birman 2006; Crul and Vermuelen, 2003).

#### **7.2.4. Support and information: a test to parental determination**

The families in the study did not live in total isolation. All the children in the studies attended monolingual schools and some parents reported issues with childhood professionals who challenged their language strategies. Consequently, some parents had to demonstrate their determination to speak their first languages to their children and stand up to professionals who questioned their children's language development.

In the following quote, Isabelle provides anecdotal evidence that a teacher asked her to consult a speech therapist about the speech development of her youngest daughter. As a



result, Isabelle was advised to drop one of the languages. This advice is still commonly given today (De Houwer, 2009b).

It's funny because when my first daughter started school, she had a small problem pronouncing some words and then her teacher, when she was four and a half, told me: "She needs to see a speech therapist" So I contacted a speech therapist who told me on the phone "oh yes, can you explain the situation a little bit?" I told her she was from a bilingual family and that her teacher had said she needed ... and she said okay, so we are going to meet but in the meantime, you need to stick to one language for the time being and I never called back because Andie and me, we looked at each other, "who is not going to speak their language, this is impossible" (laughs). I never called back... (Isabelle, 2011, 197-106)

In the last quote, Isabelle shows how confident her family was in discarding the professional advice and managing the language development of their child. This confidence might have resulted from the couple's previous experiences of raising bilingual children. It might have also tapped into Isabelle's own experience of childhood language acquisition.

Conversely, Cristina who was very anxious about raising a bilingual child, as seen in the last chapter, was happy with the advice she received from a speech therapist. In the following quote, Cristina reports that the speech therapist approved of the family choice of strategy. However, she did not offer any practical advice on how to manage the "one-parent-one-language" approach when interacting with non-Spanish speakers. Moreover, the speech therapist did not seem to have a sound knowledge of code-switching. She seemed to disapprove of it although it is acknowledged as being part of bilingual communication (Li Wei, 2012).

Yes, I was a bit surprised. I had heard that some people have had bad experiences (of speech therapists). We took him to a drop-in clinic so I can only talk about that lady. But she was really happy. She was really encouraging me to just keep on speaking Spanish, that it did not matter. She suggested trying not to code-switch. If I was speaking in Spanish, only speak in Spanish. Sometimes it is a bit difficult because if you are talking to your child and somebody else's child, and your husband, and you do have to relay the same information in a couple of languages. But she was really very supportive. She was thinking that it was all great, that it was a great development. That it would be very good for him. (Cristina, 2012, 1 210-217)

To learn more about bilingual education, some parents turn to the internet to learn from the experiences of other parents. In the following quote, Cristina comments on blogs on bilingualism. Although some sources are useful to her, Cristina sometimes finds some of the information upsetting because it is conflicting and quite "militant".

And they have a sort of section for parents that was quite reassuring, about whether it is important that you are consistent but don't get too obsessed about it because

you will lose the plot... But I do find that there is a lot of information out there for bilingual parents but it is everywhere. Sometimes it is conflicting. (Cristina, 2012, 1 366-368)

I have tried to read a few websites but it is a bit difficult because some people are very militant ... I have never realised it is like a topic like talking about politics or football, people “No, you must only do one language!!!” ... Some people are very militant about it and it is very scary. (Cristina, 2012, 1 343-350)

In short, Isabelle and Cristina’s experiences raise the issue of how the intervention of childhood professionals might affect parents’ choices. Isabelle’s couple stood firm and united in their determination to ignore professional advice and raise their children bilingually while Cristina was reassured by the advice she received although some of the advice on code-switching did not align with the latest research on bilingualism which considers code-switching as a normal stage of language development for bilingual children because bilingual children acquire their vocabulary differently from monolingual children (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Li Wei, 2000; 2008; De Houwer, 2009; 2009b). Research on family language policies also support the fact that parents are often influenced by their own experience of learning and using languages (De Houwer, 2009b). This would justify why parents who had good experiences of childhood bilingualism may be less anxious about transmitting languages as family language planning is influenced by the beliefs parents have about language and about their ability to transmit languages (Spolsky, 2004). In the data, Cristina consulted the internet and her experience suggests that there is a great deal of misinformation about familial bilingualism and that the information may potentially undermine the efforts and morale of well-intentioned parents. Authors, like Grosjean (2010), are trying to debunk myths of bilingualism and provide parents with current information on bilingualism.

### **7.3. Using education to help the children become bilingual**

Most parents in the study had an additional motivation to raise their children bilingually. They were aware that languages were a form of cultural and economic capital that would help maintain or improve the social status of their children. The parents tended to ascribe a high value to languages in the contexts of education and work. In the data, they talked about how bilingualism had helped them to become successful academically and professionally. They talked about how they had benefited from bilingualism in terms of cultural and economic capital. They expressed their aspiration to help their children retain the same socio-economic advantages that they had gained.

### 7.3.1. Parents' views of languages as cultural and economic assets

The two fathers in the study, who had a strong determination to do well professionally, talked at length about how they had gained professionally from acquiring English. Both Alain and Marc had moved to the UK as young adults to improve their professional prospects through learning English. In the following quote, Alain explains that he had decided to go to England because he was told that he needed to learn English to progress in his career in catering.

And talking with people from the trade, they were saying “if you really want to progress, you need to learn another language”, and I only spoke French, well just (Ah, Ah) ... and then I wrote to several places in London and in one of the restaurants I had sent a letter to, it is another that answered. (Alain, 2013, 1 48-54)

Marc, who also worked in catering and was equally determined to succeed professionally, also came to the UK to learn English. Marc soon realised that professionally it would be advantageous for him to live and work in the UK. Mastering English thus enabled Marc to prosper in the UK. Marc gained a higher social status faster and more easily than would have been the case in France, as he describes in the following quote.

And then afterwards, I found another job, in fact, this job here that wasn't bad at all. I made friends and then, here you are and one continues... So, again I had a new job for which I earned more money. I was well paid. I had a company car and things. I was 25. I bought a house at 26. The same, this is something that I would never have been able to do in France... It was easy; you could borrow money very easily... And then here you are and life continues. And then, from one job, I found another one and then I wanted to change and here you are (Marc, 2014, 1 179-180, 188-195).

Many parents in the study with origins outside the UK highly valued the English language and indicated that it was important for them that their children acquired a good level of English. Andrea, for example, who had insisted that her emotional language was Spanish, wanted her children to do well in English, as it would give them an edge in life wherever they lived. She was thus careful that the children progressed in English wherever they lived.

I am still hoping that we will go back soon, and live there, and take my kids with me. We will probably come back for holidays (to England). I know English is an important language. That's why I have always made sure that they work hard and that they don't neglect it. But in my heart, you know, I hope that they are raised with a Mexican culture and customs and therefore, they had to speak the language (Spanish). (Andrea, 2011, 1 63-68)

In our age of globalisation, this finding aligns perfectly with the ideology of English as a global language that should be taught or transmitted as it is thought to be the most useful language for education and business (Piller and Cho, 2013).

### **7.3.2. Children's views of languages as cultural and economic assets**

Isabelle's daughter, Sophie, was aware that her bilingualism was an enviable skill and was viewed as a professional advantage by her friends and their families in France and the UK. In the following quote, she also points out that both countries seem to have different attitudes to foreign language acquisition because they have different needs for languages.

I think that (ah, ah) they are envious that I can speak French! And also, in France, they think it is good that I have a high level of English because, in France, I think that people, they speak English better than the English speak French in England. So, they know how to speak English all the same so it is not so impressive and it is not so different but all the same, they are impressed, and they view it as a thing that is going to help me professionally, you know. (Sophie, 2012, 1 37-42)

On the other hand, Linda added that her daughter, Amy, was determined that her children spoke languages because Amy thought that languages would be useful for her children's mobility. In the following quote, Linda defines languages as her daughter's key to travelling.

I think she is very determined that her children will be bilingual. They definitely are going to be bilingual, and they might be trilingual. She wouldn't have it any other way. There would never be a way that she marries somebody and then the children, if she has children, the child would have to learn languages. She wants all that... So, she is very much pro-languages as they have given her the key to, you know, travelling. (Linda, 2014, 1 401-409)

In short, the parents in the study, who were often self-taught, seemed to have benefited socio-economically from acquiring more than one language. They value languages, in particular, English, as a cultural and economic asset that they wanted to transmit to their children in order for them to do well in life. For them language could be considered as an investment that was beneficial academically, professionally and in terms of mobility. It could be suggested that they also convey the advantages of language acquisition to their children who also seem to value languages academically, professionally or for travelling. In this respect, these findings link with Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic capital and habitus. This conceptualisation can be used to explain how parents invest in their children's bilingualism. For Bourdieu (2001), class reproduction is inevitable and

legitimate. Therefore, parents seek to equip their children with symbolic capital (forms of knowledge, skills, education) represented here by the English language and habitus (social class, education, upbringing) to help their children succeed in life. Furthermore, language ideologies studies have not only shown the link between language ideologies and social forms and structures that can serve to illuminate issues of inequality among groups of speakers (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994; Piller, 2015), but also the supremacy of the English language (Piller and Cho, 2013) as seen in the last section.

### **7.3.3. Providing language input from the dominant language through education**

Even though they may not have acquired their languages in school, school education was a very important topic for all the parents in this study and this is the reason why I chose to develop the topic in this chapter and the following chapter. The parents got very involved in their children's education. Some parents seemed to rely on formal education to provide language input to their children.

### **7.3.4. Criteria for the choice of schooling**

To start with, the choice of schooling and schools was much discussed by the parents in the study. From the data, it seems that when the parents in the study moved abroad, they sought to be well acquainted with the new school systems to give their children the best education.

It also seems that the social status of the families had an impact on the choice of schools they made. Marc, who did well economically in the UK and moved up socially, made the choice of sending his son to a private primary school because he was not happy with his local school as the school provided for children of all socio-economic backgrounds. Marc seemed to have been aware of both his new social status and the UK social class system and was able to use it to his advantage. Although his children were still very young, he was very confident about their future because he knew that through their private education, they would be able to build a social network that would help them progress in life.

We wanted to give a better education to our son... We chose the best school that exists. Because we said, we can afford to do it, for now, we hope to be able to afford it but we have to go for it and do it... And here, we have a choice, so we chose. We can afford to put him in a great school ... But it is true that everybody says that he is going to be connected with people from the whole world in fact because his friends come from all over the world... and this is what this school is about. Connections, work... (Marc, 2014, 1 399-403, 1 476-483)

However, Marc, who had been born in a working-class family and had been educated in France in the public sector, expressed some tension when talking about his choice of enrolling his son in a private school. He described in detail how the public-sector provision was inadequate and how he had taken the decision with his wife because they wanted to provide their son with a good education. Marc described some of the children who attended the school as “dirty” and as not been able to “speak well”. The latest remark seems to suggest that Mark attaches a high value to language.

It's my wife who wanted to. I would never have enrolled them in a school like that... we enrolled him in a sought-after school, but well there are still children coming from everywhere and so who live around the school, so you see what I mean, ... so all kinds of children, you know. And there are some who are a bit dirty, there are some who don't speak well and I know it's like that in all the schools and then the teachers, they don't have time to look after them and they are always in a hurry and this and that and we wanted to provide a better education for our son. (Marc, 2014, 1 385-400)

Like Marc, Julie questioned public education. Having sent her daughter to private school in Venezuela, she had reservation about the public secondary school her daughter had to attend when the family went back to England because it provided education for teenagers whom she described as “aggressive, deprived children”. It seems that in the new school, Laura was ostracised for her apparent higher social class and her way of speaking, by both pupils and teachers.

My daughter definitely had a lot of trouble adapting to school. She was 12 when she came here and she came from a small private Venezuelan school where she tied her hair up like a dancer... And she went to, when she first arrived, to the worst secondary school in town and it was heart-breaking to watch how she ...went into this school. And, you know, she was surrounded by aggressive, deprived children. But it was the only school that would take her... But it is still, you know, it was dreadful to watch. And her pronunciation. She knew the answers to a lot of things like I remember, they teased her about her pronunciation of “Venus” because they were doing planets and she said, “Venus” (pronounced the Spanish way). She knew the planet but she pronounced it and she would ask to go to the “bathroom” and the teachers would even make fun “Oh, do you want to have a bath or a shower?” Right, it is only an Americanism. (Julie, 2013, 1 153-166)

### **7.3.5. Homeschooling: Sophie's experience**

A different way to educate the children in the heritage language was to educate them at home. In her interviews, Isabelle developed her experiences of home-education. Isabelle first home educated her children when her family travelled abroad as they had no access to schools. The experience enabled her children to be taught both in French and in English

and thus helped them to acquire both languages simultaneously as she explained in the following quote.

When we travelled for 18 months, I was their teacher. Half of it, Andie did the other half but he only taught them mathematics and science, and I also taught them mathematics and science in French and I taught them French so they did quite a lot of French for 18 months. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 173-177)

This first experience seems to have been quite successful. It enabled her youngest daughter Sophie to subsequently be allowed to attend school part-time when she started school as Isabelle explained in the following quote. At home, Isabelle taught Sophie how to write in French, a skill that is considered an important cultural act for the French (Kenner, 2011).

Sophie, she went to school part-time until the age of 8 or 9. She was only going part-time. She stayed two days at home with me. I had permission from the school to do this. I was very lucky. When we came back, they saw that the children were advanced... When the teacher was doing something important, she was showing it to me and I was covering it at home with Sophie. So, she also benefited from this because obviously at three, she could not read and write like the others. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 188-194)

However, it was interesting to have Sophie's feedback on her experience. Although retrospectively, she seemed positive about her experiences, Sophie reflected that being home educated had been hard on her as a child because it meant staying at home and doing repetitive writing tasks on her own.

Besides, I stayed home and wrote all day. It was not, I did not think that it was great but now I think it was really great ... It annoyed me sometimes when I was very young. (Sophie, 2012, 1 122-126)

Isabelle's first involvement in her children's education continued when she subsequently took a position as a French teacher in the school her children attended although, in the data, she does not offer any explanation as to the reason why. However, her presence in the school premises seemed problematic for Sophie who expressed mixed feelings about her mother working in the school. In the following quote, Sophie reports that during the French classes, she felt isolated from her peers because she was given different work to reflect the higher level of French she had attained.

But in fact, what was happening was that she was the French teacher. This French level that was not very advanced so she was giving me some work to do in the corner of the classroom and I did not like that too much. (Sophie, 2012, 1 267-270)

Therefore, Sophie might have experienced feelings of isolation because she missed out on socialising with her peers. Sophie's experience is reminiscent of the experience of Angel, a Mexican school boy who was interviewed by Kagan and Lewis (1996) in their research on bilingual children in the USA. Like Isabelle, Angel resented having to do something different from his peers like attending extra English classes during school time. Although he was benefiting from the extra classes, he did not like being singled out and taken out of his peer group.

When I was young, once a week, I was not going to school and my mother would teach me French at home, writing, grammar, conjugation and all that and that I liked least sometimes because it meant I missed school and after that I could not take part in some of the stuff and I was not like everyone else. (Sophie, 2012, 1 112-116)

Sophie's view of her childhood experience changed over time. While she resented being singled out as a child, as an adult she enjoys speaking French and now thinks that it was worthwhile as seen previously.

### **7.3.6. Schooling in the heritage language – Laurie's experience**

Alain, one of the parents in the study, described the difficulties of choosing where children are taught in the heritage language. At first, Alain's main concern was to provide Laurie with a French education in England. Alain's experience showed that providing such an education could be problematic because the French school Alain wanted his daughter to attend was very elitist. In the following quote, Alain described in detail how he tried to secure a place in a selective French school for his daughter, Laurie. This represented extra parental efforts on his part as well as planning, as his daughter had to be enrolled as soon as she was born.

She was born, a month later, I had enrolled her at the Lycée Français [Ah yeah, in London] because it took a long time, long time before [OK] ... and as soon as the child was potty trained, you could take them to, it was called "Le Petit Jardin Français" in Notting Gate... It was a nursery school. They only spoke French. (Alain, 2013, 1 115-121)

Alain also indicates the financial sacrifice that he was asked to make to provide Laurie with a French education. Later, Alain's family was faced with another type of sacrifice. The French school was selective and if the children did not succeed academically, they could not stay in the school and had to continue their studies in France if the parents wanted to give them a French education. So, to continue to give his daughter such an



education, Alain would have had to send his daughter away to boarding school, or to stay with relatives in France.

And what was happening is that... the level of the secondary school is very high, hum, the pass mark, if you do not have 14/20, you are out [Ah yeah], and you have to pay huh, I was already paying when she was 3 years old, at the time I was paying £ 500 per quarter or something like that, it was quite a bit of money already. [yeah, yeah] and we had customers who had their children who were 12-13 years old and they said, yeah my daughter is at her grandmother's in France or else she is boarding in France because they wanted to continue with a French education, Ohhhh, we looked at each other with my wife and I said, "Listen, we only have one daughter, and we want to keep her, we want to see a lot of her, and already I don't see her much in the evenings" so we changed schools and we put her in the English system. (Alain, 2013, 1 152-162)

### **7.3.7. Schooling in the dominant languages: Laura and Amy's experiences**

Some children like Laura and Amy acquired their second languages, which were the dominant languages of the countries they lived in when they started school. However, starting school with no knowledge of the dominant language seemed problematic for both children who both seemed to have experienced a "silent phase" as a result.

Laura, who was addressed in English by both her parents, did not speak Spanish when she started nursery school in Venezuela and Julie, her mother, could not say how well Laura understood Spanish. In the following quote, Julie reports that she purposely sent her daughter to school so that Laura could start learning Spanish. However, Julie reflected that she had not thought too much about the timing of sending her daughter to school when she used "probably". Julie describes Laura as becoming silent, which would suggest that Laura experienced difficulties adjusting to school whether it was a school in general or a school in a different language. Julie seems to attribute this phase of silence to Laura's developing bilingualism. In the quote, Julie explains how she tried to dispel the staff's worries about Laura's silence. Incidentally, in the quote, Julie showed her theoretical knowledge of bilingualism by using specialist terms such as "silent phase", "normal phase", "platform".

She got to about two and a half and I thought it is probably time she had more contacts with Spanish because she did not speak Spanish. She probably understood it but she did not speak any Spanish. So, I enrolled her in a kindergarten and I got a job there at the same time, teaching English to the babies. And she went completely silent for a year. So, you know, the silent phase is not a joke. She refused to speak to anybody at the school. At home, she would just speak English as normal but at the school, she would not speak to anybody in any language. She would whisper to me because I was there. So, I think the school, they were very disturbed. They wondered what I was telling her or doing to her. I said "this is just a normal phase in bilingualism, she is gone silent" and then when she actually started speaking, she had actually by that time adopted Spanish as her platform. (Julie, 2013, 1 95-106)

The last quote is interesting as it shows that the school was not prepared to cater for the needs of a bilingual child or more generally a child who had difficulties adapting to school. It could also be speculated that Julie's direct involvement might have played a part in Laura's behaviour.

In France, Linda also relied on nursery school to help her daughter, Amy, to acquire French. Amy, who was born and raised in England until she was two and a half, moved to France with her two English-speaking parents. Linda seems to have considered that a total immersion in French was the best strategy to help Amy acquire French as she describes in the following quote.

I was quite cruel and I sent her there. I wasn't working. I sent her there all day long (Ah, Ah). And she slept there. And I did that so she would be in a bath of French and she would get the French because I thought she, we are in France... So, it is helping her to fit in having this input (Maternelle) so that is really why I always, I wouldn't have left her in school all day apart from the fact that it was the best way for her to learn everything. (Linda, 2014, 1 48, 1 334-335)

However, Linda did not seem to have appreciated the effect that hearing French all day long would have on her daughter when she started nursery school with no knowledge of French. In the last quote, Linda jested that she was cruel. In the following quote, Linda reports that because of her immersion in French, Amy struggled in adjusting to nursery school ("maternelle") in France and like Laura went through a silent phase. Amy did not try to communicate in French and seemed to show some distress by crying.

Again, whether Amy found it hard to adjust to school as a very young child or whether she struggled with the language is a matter for speculation. It could be speculated, for example, that Amy might have found it hard to function in a new environment in which she suddenly could not communicate at all having just acquired English, her only language of communication (Igoa, 1995). It seems that contrary to Laura, Amy had never heard the language of school before. However, Linda seems to attribute Amy's distress to exterior factors such as the size of the school or the age of the other children when she describes Amy's experience in school.

And then I sent her off to the "maternelle" and initially she went to a big "maternelle". Being the oldest, everyone else was like a baby. And they couldn't even, hardly, speak French and she would speak English. So, it seemed rubbish and she cried, she did not like it. (Linda, 2014, 1 31-36)

In the following quote, it seems that instead of preparing Amy for acquiring French, Linda had prepared Amy to acquire English before they left England. This seemed to suggest that it was very important for Linda that Amy had a good grasp of English, which

was her dominant language before they moved to France. In the following quotes, Linda described how she made much effort to make sure that Amy would know English before they left England. Linda seems very proud of the fact that her daughter seemed to have acquired a sound knowledge of grammar at such a very young age when she said that thanks to her efforts, her daughter “spoke very good English”, insisting that she “had all her tenses and everything”. This contrasts with theories of language acquisition. At two and a half, children normally assimilate grammar without being taught (Soifer, 2012) through social practice and not as an intellectual exercise (Burkitt, 2014). Thus, Linda’s understanding of how children acquire a second language might be questioned.

When I arrived with my ex-husband and my daughter, she was two and a half but I had already taken, made a lot of effort to make sure she spoke very good English. And she had all her tenses and everything at two and a half and she understood all of that. So, she grasped all of that... (Linda, 2014, l 28-31)

Experiencing school in another language seemed particularly difficult for younger children like Amy and Laura although both started school at an age that is deemed linguistically favourable to achieve native-like competence. However, the issue of age and native-speakerness is much debated (Chin and Wigglesworth, 2007). In Amy and Laura’s cases, the lack of linguistic preparation might have hindered their initial adaptation. It could be suggested that however well intentioned, Julie and Linda might have contributed to the problems of adaptation of their children by sending their very young daughters to school with no language skills in the dominant language possibly because of a lack of knowledge about what constitute bilingualism and how to help the children adjust to new circumstances.

Mike also reported that his younger son started primary school in England without speaking English when the family moved back from Mexico. However, contrary to Laura and Amy, Mike’s son could understand the dominant language well although he did not speak it. In the following quote, Mike reports that his son had no special support from the school. Mike did not mention a silent phase and it seems that his son just acquired the language although his teachers were not trained to deal with a child who could not speak the dominant language. Mike’s family already had the experience of having raised two other children bilingually and seemed rather unfazed by the experience.

No, but when Diego was young, we were living in Mexico and when he come back to England for primary school, he did not speak any English. He only spoke Spanish. He understood English but he did not speak it. And I thought the teachers found that really funny, not in a nice way, but I think the teacher really liked the challenge of having a boy who could not speak English and I thought that was all

right but no, no one has ever told us to do anything. So we just gone and done it.  
(Mike, 2011, 1 115-120)

Unlike Mike, the parents in the study seem to concentrate on whether their children could speak the language rather than understand it. Obviously, in some cases, a child who suddenly changed countries could not be expected to understand the language right away. However, in the case of Laura, Julie only mentions in passing that her daughter probably understood Spanish but did not speak it when she started nursery in Spanish while she gives a lot of precision about her daughter's silent phase.

Other children, who already knew the second language, like Isabelle's children, had a good experience of attending school in another country for a short period. When Isabelle's family briefly moved to France, Isabelle's children were able to attend a French primary school, which equipped them with reading skills in French. Isabelle reported her children's experience of learning how to read with a method called "Le Ratus" as very positive because it instilled in her children a love of reading. This method is a very popular learning method of reading in France because the children love the main character which is a green rat called Ratus. It is used in primary schools with children aged 6-8.

We lived in France for a year. They went to nursery school. They saw other pupils, other children in France learning French with the book they used in Reception. It was "Le Ratus", it was called "Le Ratus". We really exploited "the Ratus". They loved the method, the b-a ba, very, very French. It worked very well with them but "Le Ratus" while in France, it takes a year usually, they really assimilated it very well, you see, this first method. Next to that, they started reading a lot of books....  
(Isabelle, 2011, 1 171-177)

In short, the parents in the study tried to make the most of their children's schooling to maximise the language input for their children. The experiences of the families were surprisingly diverse for such a small sample of participants. They included experiences of home-schooling, schooling in the public and private sectors as well as short stays in schools of the heritage language. They range from experiences of nursery schools to secondary schools. Most parents in the study reported being very involved in their children's education. At times, they come across as been very eager to get involved. Isabelle, Julie and Linda commented on how they worked in the places their children were learning the dominant languages. They talked about their experiences of choosing schools, including selective schools, teaching their children at home and taking positions in the schools their children attended. However, the lack of knowledge of both parents and school staff about how to prepare and support bilingual children, and in particular very young children, to acquire a second language in a school setting seemed problematic. Most children seem to

have had some kinds of problems adjusting easily to schools. This was most obviously the case of the two children who started nursery school in a different language. They were reported as having experienced a “silent phase” that did not seem to have been understood by either the school staff or the parents. Therefore, my data seem to demonstrate the existence of “silent periods” (Krashen, 1981) which is a controversial topic in the literature of bilingual education (Hoffman, 1989; Igoa, 1995, Bligh, 2011; 2012; Roberts, 2014). Knowledge of silent periods is important because silent periods might signal uncertainty and distress about the new languages (Clark and Moss, 2001). This might have been the case for Amy and Laura in my study. Likewise, Roberts (2014) shows that the constant presence of a mother in the classroom might have played a part in the silent period of a young Japanese boy of two who went silent when he started attending an American pre-school. On the other hand, Igoa (1995) advocates the need for a better training in schools about silent periods. Home-schooling was understandably reported as isolating while the presence of a parent in school also seemed to be problematic because it seemed to have stopped one child to feel really independent. However, the experiences of short stays in schools of the heritage languages were reported positively as they motivated the children to learn their second languages. This aligns with the literature on family language planning that lists short stays abroad as beneficial for language acquisition and socialization (Spolsky, 2004).

#### **7.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined how the parents in the study tried to facilitate their children’ language acquisition and the strategies they used to provide their children with language input in both their languages. Providing the children with enough input of the heritage language seems to have been hard for most of the parents. It also involved a number of extra parenting tasks.

To start with, the parents had to agree on a strategy. The data shows that the strategy they chose imposed itself to the parents as their main motivation was to speak their first languages to their children because they considered these languages emotional. However, sticking to one strategy was rather difficult. Initially, the most popular strategy of the families was the “one parent, one language” approach. However, the “one parent, one language” approach was not an easy strategy to implement because it affected the way the whole family interacted. When the children were very young, they spent more time with their mother and as a result, the heritage language tended to dominate in the families. To feel less isolated, some of the fathers resolved to speak the heritage language at home.

Adopting a common language from the start, which was the second strategies of the families, raised issues of identity and power, especially in the case of English. However, in all the families in the study, one of the parents was less competent in the chosen language as the other which raised the issue of the quality of the language input although this issue did not seem to be a major concern for the parents, who were more interested in quantity. Life events such as the break-up of the families could affect the balance of language input that the children received. The parents of the new one-parent families had to put a lot of effort into raising their children bilingually.

Some families who were functioning as monolingual families at home relied on schools to provide the dominant language for their children. The children had very diverse experiences of language learning in a school setting. Most of the children experienced some issues of adaptation because both their parents and the school staff lack knowledge on how to prepare and support bilingual children. Nevertheless, most parents got very involved in their children's education, from choosing schools to teaching in the schools their children attended.

For all the families in the study, exposing children to languages and encouraging them to develop bilingually was a task that required time and energy. At home, the families had to provide enough input of languages as well as monitor the language output of their children. This monitoring involved trying to control that the children used the heritage language at home. When the children started school, their vocabulary in the dominant language tended to increase and it was difficult for the children to talk with their parents in the heritage languages. Outside the home, some parents were concerned about their credibility as parents and felt, for example that they had to translate what they were saying to their children in the heritage languages.

My data confirmed published findings on childhood bilingual development about the difficulty to stick to the demanding OPOL approach and provide bilingual children with enough input in two languages (Romaine, 1995; Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; De Houwer, 2005; 2007, 2009a; 2009b; 2014; 2015) while living in monolingual countries in which children get a greater input of the dominant languages through school (Shin, 2005; Spolky, 2004).

My data also showed that some of the parents in the study might have drifted towards a mixed language strategy (Lanza, 2007; De Houwer, 2009b) because they struggled to implement familial bilingualism, as discussed in the literature of family language planning (Spolsky, 2009; Kirsch, 2012; Döpke, 1992). Parents had to exert some control over their

children language output and try to control the language environment of their children, including the school environments (Spolsky, 2009; Curdt-Christiansen, 2013)

In addition, my data confirmed that the English language was valued by the parent participants as a global language as discussed in the literature on language ideologies (Piller and Cho, 2013) but that there was little institutional support for bilingual children in monolingual countries, like France or the UK (Piller, 2015). This could result in children experiencing “silent periods” that could be influenced by the mother’s presence (Roberts, 2014). This lack of support could make parents, and in particular mothers, particularly vulnerable (Mills, 2004; Okita, 2002) although parents who had previous experiences of bilingualism seemed more confident (Spolsky, 2004; De Houwer, 2009b) even if they were not totally knowledgeable about bilingualism (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Li Wei, 2000; 2008; De Houwer, 2009a; 2009b) and seemed to believe in common myths of bilingualism (Grosjean, 2010).

The parents’ motivation to equip their children with symbolic capital and habitus aligned with Bourdieu’s theories of class reproduction and fitted with studies of language ideologies which link language ideologies to social forms and structures (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994; Piller, 2015).

Further, this chapter raised issues of family relationships. The parents reported on difficulties in their relationships and raised issues of power and identity that are further examined in the next chapter.

## **Chapter eight**

### **The emotional impact of implementing familial bilingualism**

I didn't think that it would be emotionally so emotional. (Cristina, 2012, 1. 508)

#### **8.1. Introduction**

In the last two chapters, I examined the families' experiences of language transmission. In this chapter, I examine how these experiences seem to affect the participants emotionally. The emotional aspect that surprised me most was the prevalence of feelings of isolation, which seem to permeate my data because I had not noted such a prevalence in the literature of bilingualism in the context of familial bilingualism. Isolation seems to have represented a challenge for the families in the study. It affected their affective and social life, including their integration into the communities they lived in. In this chapter, I concentrate on what the participants said about feeling isolated when using languages at home, fitting into their new environments and socialising.

#### **8.2. The emotional impact of using two languages at home**

Unlike monolingual families, the bilingual families in the study had to make regular choices about which language to use outside and inside the home. In the data, the choice of languages used at home seemed to be an issue for most of the participants. There seemed to be a discrepancy between what the parents said about bilingualism and the strategies they used to raise bilingual children and what they actually did in their homes although this is a common phenomenon documented in the literature of family language planning (King and Fogle, 2006a). As seen in the previous chapters, fathers were said to believe in using their first languages with their children but in reality, they switched languages at home to feel more included. In this section, I examine what the participants say about using languages at home that they found problematic and at times isolating. I also look at issues of power and parental responsibility.

##### **8.2.1. Dealing with the use of different languages to express emotions**

I showed in chapter five that the parent participants tried speaking their first languages to their children because they were the languages they used for expressing



emotions. However, in their interactions with other people including their spouses, the parents often made different choices. This interested me because it seems to show that the concept of emotional language can be quite fluid. In this, my data aligns with studies on bilingualism and emotion that shows that bilinguals can use any of their two languages to express emotions depending on whether they consider their first languages as their emotional language (Schrauf and Durazo-Arvizu, 2006) or whether they prefer to use their second language because they have become dominant in that language (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Marian and Kaushanskaya, 2008; Dewaele and Pavlenko, 2002; Pavlenko, 2006; Kramsch, 2007; 2009). Furthermore, a number of studies on bilingualism and emotions highlight the role of culture, age and age of migration in the choice of languages to express emotions (Schrauf and Sanchez, 2004; Marian and Kaushanskaya, 2008). For example, Isabelle, as seen in chapter five, had insisted that her “emotional language” was French. However, in the following quote, she says that she mainly spoke English with her husband. This seems to show that Isabelle could also use English in intimate relationships when expressing emotions.

When we lived in France, we lived in France for a year, we spoke French at home. The language was French. But all the other years, the other nineteen years, as we were always in English speaking countries, we spoke English, in fact, he and I, but I speak French to the children. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 70-73)

Isabelle and Andie’s choice of English seems rather arbitrary. They seem to speak English together just because they happened to live in English-speaking countries. Likewise, Cristina and her husband seem to speak English together because they live in an English-speaking country and it is more convenient. In the following quote, Cristina self-reports that her English is good enough to express emotions in English with her husband although like Isabelle she had insisted that she needed to use her first language with her child.

I find that although in general, my working life, my personal life is mostly in English so that, it is fine...I think my English is good enough that from a sort of technical point of view, I can express myself at an emotional level because I do that with my husband... We met in English, he didn’t speak any Spanish and now we have kind of continued speaking in English just because our lives during the day are in English so it is much easier. You don’t have to translate everything that has happened... (Cristina, 2012, 1 244, 233-237)

It also seems that for Cristina, speaking a second language could be reduced to a matter of translation. Cristina had also mentioned translating when she talked about performing for an audience of parents in a public park. In the last quote, Cristina says that

it is easier to speak directly to her husband in English rather than try to translate it in Spanish. Cristina's experience is similar to Marc's son returning from school and struggling to explain his day in French. This aligns with Grosjean's (2015) complementary principle of bilingualism. Bilinguals use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life and with different people. They do not have to be equally competent their two languages (Grosjean, 2015).

In the following quote, Julie, who used English with her Venezuelan husband, explains that communication could be difficult when spouses did not have the same first language. It seems that Julie was not convinced that the communication between mixed-nationality spouses could work because of the cultural differences.

The meaning behind the language and the whole cultural stuff that goes behind it. You are not talking about the same things. When they say men and women are talking about the same thing but a man speaking English who is actually thinking in Spanish... (Julie, 2013, 1 388-391)

In the following quote, Julie seems to think that individuals have personalities influenced by their nationalities. She talks about her husband as if he had two personalities: the English personality she knew because they spoke English together and a Venezuelan personality that she had just glimpsed at when she had had a rare conversation with him in Spanish. This conversation in Spanish had made her realise that she liked her husband better in Spanish. Therefore, Julie wondered whether their use of English might have stopped her from knowing her husband's "Venezuelan personality" and whether they might have got along better if they had spoken Spanish together during their marriage.

He wouldn't answer me in Spanish. And on several occasions. I only had one conversation with him in 25 years in Spanish. And I actually quite liked him in Spanish. And I thought afterwards, what a pity. I might have actually got on much better with him if we had spoken Spanish. (Julie, 2013, 1 300-303)

In the following quote, Julie talks about how speaking Spanish seemed to have a transformative effect on her. She describes being a different person when speaking Spanish, being more relaxed and less officious which she sums up as being less British. Julie talks about liking herself when she speaks Spanish and wonder whether husband might have liked her better if they had spoken Spanish.

And I don't know how much he liked me in Spanish. He might not have. You are just a different person in a different language. I like me in Spanish. (Ah, Ah) ... I am much more relaxed in Spanish. Much less officious. Much less British. In Spanish, I am much more laid-back. And I enjoy that side of myself that does not come out so much in English. (Julie, 2013, 1 305-311)

Julie might have liked herself better in Spanish for several reasons. Maybe she associated English with work and her everyday life. And Spanish might have enabled her to be different from her usual English self (Kramsch, 2009). Julie raises a point that can be very important for a mixed-nationality couple about their choice of languages. According to Julie, this choice could potentially have changed the outcome of her marriage. In addition, Julie highlighted issues of power in language use. In the following quote, Julie says that her husband was proud of her for speaking English and he insisted on speaking English even when the couple separated. It seems that English enabled him to gain status and power. In the following quote, Julie reports how she had reflected that she might have been a “trophy wife” for her husband.

I was thinking I was actually probably a trophy wife. And it never occurred to me. And he was always very proud of me being a foreigner and speaking English and as I say even when we separated he didn't want to speak to me in Spanish. (Julie, 2013, 1 312-314)

Julie also reveals that Ramiro's decision to speak English with her was not negotiable. Furthermore, Ramiro continued to speak English to her after their divorce although he was getting less fluent in that language while Julie was becoming very fluent in Spanish.

What particularly interested me, was this insistence on his side, my husband's side, that we should speak English and refuse to speak Spanish to me and even when we separated. We did once and of course, his English was deteriorating because he ever only spoke English to me so we had very limited time to speak English (Julie, 2013, 1 296-298)

It seems that Julie was never able to choose the language she wanted to speak with Ramiro, even when she realised that she preferred to speak Spanish with him. In this couple, the choice of language seems rather complex. Julie and Ramiro's use of a common language was not based on language competence but on Ramiro's personal preference.

Julie's example shows how culture can be intertwined with language. It could also be suggested that Ramiro's insistence on Julie speaking English might have made her retain her English personality in Venezuela and have an effect on her integration into her new country. In the following quote, when she talks about her life in Venezuela, Julie compares herself to Mr Macgoo, a British cartoon character who seems to lead his own life oblivious of everything that happens around him.

Have you ever seen Mr Macgoo cartoons? ... He is a little tiny fellow and he wears these great big ends of bottle glasses you know, and he walks through disasters you know. Things crash and cars crash and things fall off buildings and he just walks

through it all, you know and he doesn't see anything and I think I must have been like that for 20 odd years, you know just walking through Venezuela and not seeing anything (Julie, 2013, 1 403-408)

In the following quote, Julie explains that she had some difficulties integrating at work because she spoke English. Her response to the event she described and her use of "excuse me" (Hickey and Steward, 2005) seems to suggest that indeed Julie had retained her British personality.

At work, I was not integrating and in fact, I had this moment one day I walked into, it was a room that led to the library and the whole staff, the whole department was sitting there. And they were obviously having a staff meeting and (ah, ah) I knew nothing about this staff meeting and I sort of walked through and said, "Oh, excuse me" and walked out the other side (Julie, 2013, 1 382-389)

To sum up, the way the couples interacted was important at an individual level. It might also have had an effect in the communication of the whole family. The language that the couples used together was significant. It could be divisive because it involved power and cultural differences and hinder the integration of the parents of the heritage language into their new communities. This links to recent research on European families and the assimilation of European mixed-nationality couples (Piller, 2004; Gaspar, 2009; Dervin, 2011). Lastly, in my study, some parents clearly prioritised the needs of the children over those of their spouses when insisting on the use of the heritage language.

### **8.2.2. Dealing with transmitting the heritage language**

I now examine how the choice of a common language for the family affected the parents who transmitted the heritage languages. The transmission of first languages was emotional for most parents as I examined in chapter five and most parents wanted their children to become bilingual. However, the task of transmitting the heritage language tended to rest more heavily on the speakers of the heritage language and this generated strong feelings of parental responsibility for those parents. The parents who spoke the heritage languages commented on the importance of feeling supported by their spouses. They also commented on how a lack of support from their spouses affected them emotionally.

Most parents talked of feeling supported by their spouses in the first years of raising their children bilingually. However, as the children grew older and more independent, the situation changed for some parents who reported feeling less supported by their spouses. In the following quote, Isabelle talks about her feelings of responsibility and anxieties about transmitting the heritage language. She also talks about the continual fear she has had about

transmitting her language and culture when she says, “I don’t need to be afraid now”. Isabelle mentioned this fear several times in her interviews.

Yes, because my husband has not really made any efforts. Often even, when I speak French, he interrupts me, he continues in English. Sometimes I have the impression that he does it on purpose. I think he does not realize it but it's true that when you are looking for your turn in the conversation, I just feel it is a fight to get in but at the same time I forget more and more what language I have spoken so I think that with time things have improved and then over time I realized that my children are French and that's it, they are grown-up, they are done and I don't need to be afraid now. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 464-471)

The last quote shows how difficult it is for Isabelle’s family to interact in the heritage language because all the members of the family have become dominant in the language of the community. This seems to include Isabelle as she says that she often forgets which language she is speaking.

Isabelle’s language competence seems to exceed Cristina’s who talked about speaking another language in terms of consciously translating from one language to another. In chapter five, Cristina, like Isabelle, acknowledged her British husband’s support and his efforts to speak Spanish to their son. However, she talks about having a greater responsibility because she is the main transmitter of Spanish. In the following quote, Cristina uses work-related terms such as “pressure, duty, goal, problem, failing and achieved”, to talk about managing her child’s bilingualism. She seems to construe it as a commitment that brings about extra parental work. Cristina also comments on her task in terms of performance. She talks about being scrutinised. This seems to reflect how unnatural and stressful Cristina might view raising her child bilingually. Not only does she have to work harder than other parents do but she might also be judged on the work she does.

Although my husband is very supportive and he is great, he does speak Spanish to Tommy ... but I do feel that when you are the one who has a minority language you feel under pressure to perform. And every time when I went to playgroups with Tommy and there were English songs, every time I was singing a song and doing the signs, I felt that I was kind of failing my duty to only speak Spanish. And I do find that it stresses me a lot sometimes. On the other hand, at other times, I feel that I am doing my best and his understanding of Spanish and that was my first goal, and I have achieved it. So, it is a bit of a roller-coaster all the time. I don’t like having children... I don’t like having children it is very tiring (ha-ha) ... but in my next life (Ah, Ah) if I have children it will be with a person who speaks the same language and then there will be no problem. (Cristina, 2012, 1 475-490)

At the end of the last quote, Cristina gives another indication of how difficult she found her extra parenting work and responsibility. She jests that if she could have

another life she would not parent a bilingual child. At the same time, Cristina seems determined to transmit her first language to her child by providing him with a maximum of input in Spanish. To achieve this, Cristina is prepared to make sacrifices such as working part-time. This shows how important her son's bilingualism is for Cristina.

I am going part-time from September ... but I do want to spend more time with him because I feel that if we do more Spanish things if I can find things that we can do together speaking Spanish, he will have, and even if he doesn't become fluent Spanish speaker he understands Spanish, and that's important. And how good he is in Spanish will depend on him. ... But I feel I need to put as much efforts as I can. (Cristina, 2012, 1 460-470)

To sum up, parenting bilingual children involves commitment from both parents in the families and bring about a lot of emotions linked to parenting that have to do with feeling unsupported and insecure about not been able to transmit the heritage language. In the data, Isabelle and Cristina, the parents of the heritage languages discussed the support they received from their spouses. Isabelle talked about the efforts made by her husband when her children were very young while Cristina described her husband as very supportive. Parenting a bilingual child can be seen as hard work because it means a continuous effort to stick to the heritage language even when the children are growing up and all the members of the families, including the parents of the heritage languages, might have become dominant in the other language. However, this hard work often goes unrecognized. For King and Fogle (2006), it is an "invisible" work that may result "in maternal guilt, stress and personal trauma" (ibid. p.697) also paradoxically, mothers can also feel exposed or according to Cristina "scrutinized".

### **8.2.3. Dealing with an unbalance of languages at home**

In the study, the parents also talked about the responsibility of monitoring the balance of language input at home. In the following quote, Isabelle talks about the importance of providing a maximum of input of French to compensate for the fact that the family has mainly lived in English-speaking countries. It seems that for Isabelle, the language used at home has to be monitored to obtain an adequate balance of the two languages. In the quote, Isabelle talks about her feeling of responsibility. She also talks about her fear again. This shows how emotive the issue is for her.

We live all the time in English. It would have been a little bit more balanced if we had lived in France longer anyway because I would have readily agreed to speak English at home I think if I had felt a balance but I have always been so afraid that

my children didn't, that I wouldn't be able to pass them this part of my identity. It was a little, how can I say this, a form of compensation. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 209-214)

Cristina also comments on her sense of isolation at being the only Spanish-speaker to her son. For her, this means that she has to represent the whole of Spain for him. In the following two quotes, Cristina uses terms such as “worry”, “feel”, “pressure” or “emotional” to show the strength of her emotional response to transmitting Spanish. Cristina also reveals how emotionally unprepared she was to transmit her first language.

But it does worry me a lot, bilingualism is something, because I feel, because I am the only consistent Spanish influence he's got, I feel a lot of pressure. (Cristina, 2012, 1 298-299)

I didn't expect it would be emotionally so, I mean I thought it would be a challenge in the sense that you are only one person who is speaking Spanish and you have to make up for a whole country. (Cristina, 2012, 1 506-508)

In the following quote, Isabelle shows how easily the balance of languages can tilt unless she monitors the family interactions. Isabelle describes the dynamics of interactions in her family. The quote emphasises Isabelle's constant effort to keep the family from becoming monolingual in English.

Sometimes I tell him: “You have to help me”. I wish he would try a little bit. They speak a lot in English to me, sometimes in French conversations, you come into the room, and it changes because of your presence. I said to him, “If you say a French word, it transforms (laughs) you know, it does not come naturally so he cannot, they have always done that. They can start a sentence, because they look at me, in French, and then they look at their father and continue in English. Since they were little. The problem is that there are too many reasons to speak English and not enough reasons to speak French. You see, it gives me a great responsibility. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 240-248)

In the last quote, Isabelle points out that there are too many reasons to speak English when the family is together. She seems to blame her husband because he seems to trigger the change of language. She also seems to view herself as the guardian of the use of French when she said “it gives me great responsibility” and this role appears to be quite isolating.

In the following quote, Isabelle comments on feeling excluded. As a speaker of French, Isabelle talks of experiencing feelings of exclusion when her family speaks English. She reports that hearing English at home has a strong emotional impact on her. Isabelle talks about how hearing her family speak English makes her feel tired. Isabelle's tiredness could be due to the strong emotions she experiences when her family does not speak French. However, in my experience, it is not uncommon to hear second language users say that hearing a second language is tiring. It can be cognitively tiring for individuals

to function bilingually unless they are very fluent and can switch easily (Kramsch, 2009; Bialystok, 2015). Knowing that a first language is less used or valued might also add a layer of emotional stress.

And sometimes, now that they are older and that they do more things outside the house and when they come back home, I feel a bit excluded in the family when they all speak together and I say to them “you could speak in French please, I am tired” and it is tiring to hear them talk in English and about all this stuff, either new technologies or music, things I do not know sometimes and you add the language to that and I say to myself that I do not know them (laughs). I don’t know what they are talking about. I tell them. I feel that Andie; he follows more easily than me because it’s his language. It’s me actually. I think the biggest rejection if there was one, it’s me. It is I who at times reject English because I am afraid that there is not enough balance. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 216-224)

In the last quote, however, Isabelle refers to the fact that she is feeling tired because she has little knowledge of the topics her family likes to talk about whether in French or in English. This raises the issue of parenting older bilingual children and the need for parents to keep up with the topics of interest of their children in their two languages. Thus, as the children grow older, parents of bilingual children might have to work harder on acquiring the language of their children.

Isabelle’s daughter, Sophie, also reported on how her mother feels when she hears French at home. In the following quotes, Sophie talks about her mother’s needs and frustration at not hearing enough French. She also talks about the physical impact – tiredness – that it has on her thus reiterating her mother’s words. Sophie shows that Isabelle’s family is aware of Isabelle’s tiredness. It might be an important issue for them because they seem to be a close knit family. For Sophie, her mother needs to hear French at home to compensate for the efforts of having to speak English outside the home. The quote highlights Sophie’s empathy for her mother. However, it seems that the family struggles to accommodate Isabelle’s need. This shows how difficult it might be to manage the balance of languages in the family.

She says that it is tiring to hear English all the time. And also, she speaks English every day with people and it’s not her language so she would like to be able to speak French with her family. And I understand because she is French and if she hears English all the time. (Sophie, 2012, 1 198-200)

In the following quote, Sophie reports that the family tends to use English because her father is dominant in English and her mother’s English is better than her father’s French. Thus, speaking English might be the easiest solution for everyone or perhaps the one



interpreted as the fairest by the family. This quote highlights how Isabelle's children seem to feel responsible for accommodating the needs of their two parents.

I think we would all speak English and there would be my mother who is behind who says, "in French!" (Ha, ha) ... She wants us to speak French when we're together because most of the time we speak English together because my father, his level of French is less good than my mother's level of the English. So, I don't know, I don't know why we speak in English because our lives are conducted in English. My sister, her boyfriend is English. My brother, he does not speak French at the university ... (Sophie, 2012, 1 92-98)

However, feelings of exclusion are not restricted to parents. Bilingual children might also feel isolated when parents used the heritage language all the time. Julie described her experience of trying to regain her English, which had become poorer after a long period in Venezuela. Having realised that she was isolated from her first language and culture, Julie says that she started communicating with other English-speakers on the internet. In the following quote, Julie says that she found the experience of regaining her first language exhilarating. It helped her regain both her language skills in English and elements of her culture.

So, my English was getting rather reduced and, at that time, I was relating to a lot of people online, English speaking people. I realised how isolated I was. That I didn't have a chance to speak to anybody in English. And so, I started chatting online... and it was such a pleasure, to just write away in English, you know, people making jokes in English, using words I had not heard for years and me, being me in English. So, it was very exciting for me to be able to talk to people online in English. (Julie, 2013, 1 243-251)

In the following quote, Julie further examines the effect that regaining English had on her children. She reports that because she was communicating so much in English on the internet, her children, who were going through a difficult time following their parents' divorce, might have felt isolated. So, communicating in English to remedy her sense of isolation seems to have had an effect on the whole family. It seems to have created another form of isolation for Julie's children.

They thought that I was isolating myself from them I think. It was all a very confusing time... I may have told them that I was really enjoying communicating in English. Yes, so no, they never questioned that part of things. They didn't like me being online all the time, which is quite understandable (Ah, Ah) because if I wasn't chatting to people online, I was doing translations and earning money because I was a single parent by then... And so, I am not sure. I think it was such a disturbed time for everybody with the separation and them not being with their father. (Julie, 2013, 1 253-254, 1 258-266)

The last quote is also interesting for what it says about how changes in family circumstances might affect bilingual families. It seems that as a result of divorce the input of languages might change because children are separated from one of the parents and the remaining parent might not be as available. In Julie's case, the language use of the family was already rather complex. Julie's children seem to have had only an input of English at home because their father had insisted on speaking English. This would suggest that Julie's children were competent speaker of English. Thus, rather than being upset because their mother spoke English all the time, Julie's children might have been upset because she was regaining her British culture. It is difficult to ascertain how bicultural the children were because the family only lived in Venezuela. Julie's children might have felt estranged from their mother's English culture. Julie talked about rediscovering her English self when she said "me being me in English" thus referring to the close association between language and identity. On the other hand, Julie's children might have simply felt isolated because they received less attention from their mother at a time when they had very little attention from their father.

In short, the participants commented on how they used languages at home and how it affected the various members of the families emotionally. The parents who spoke the heritage languages felt very responsible for the transmission of their first languages and cultures to their children because they were the main transmitter of the heritage languages. This aligns with the literature on the sense of responsibility of bilingual mothers (Norton, 2000). They talked about their anxieties and even fears. They expressed the need to be supported by their spouses and commented on feeling isolated if this support was not forthcoming. The parents of the heritage languages talked about the extra parental tasks involved in the transmission of languages and in particular of the task of monitoring the balance of language use at home. Feelings of exclusion tended to occur when this balance tilted towards the dominant language. This usually occurred when the children allied with the parent of the dominant language although some children seemed aware of the emotional needs of the other parent and tried to be supportive. However, in practice, it was sometimes difficult for the children to meet the different needs of their parents. Incidentally, some children could also feel isolated through the language use of the parents.

Language use was not neutral and involved issues of power (Piller, 2002a, Pavlenko, 2003; Fell, 2012). The languages that the participants spoke brought up issues of power, status, and prestige (Baker, 2001). In addition, some participants talked about bilinguals as having different personalities when using different languages. This could complicate their communication with others and in particular with their spouses. Couples tended to speak

the dominant language together, which raised issues of what constituted a language of emotions for the participants (Dewaele, 2010; Pavlenko, 2008) who had presented their first languages as emotional in relation to their children in chapter five.

### **8.3. The emotional impact of living and integrating into new environments**

In the data, the participants also talked about how they lived and tried integrating into their new environments. In this section, I examine the issues raised by the parents of the heritage languages in relation to living in a new environment and being foreign.

#### **8.3.1. Places and opportunities**

Moving to new environments affected the participants. In the data, some participants seem to have been perceived as different in their new environments. They talked about how this might have affected their integration. To start with, I examine the cases of two mothers, Linda and Julie, who talked about how cultural and socio-economic differences had affected their integration. They both eventually divorced and became single parents.

In the following quote, Linda, an Englishwoman who lived with her young daughter in France, seems to express some doubts about the extent to which she had integrated in France. She talks about feeling “part of it but not part of it”. Interestingly, by using the verb “to feel” in this context, Linda seems to suggest that for her, integration was an emotive issue. In the quote, Linda also explains that the villagers seemed to treat her differently. She says that in the village, she was “their English person”. Although the use of the possessive “their” renders the naming affective, naming her by her nationality might have exposed Linda’s difference. It could be interpreted as a constant reminder to Linda that she was not one of them.

For English people, we were quite integrated, although we weren’t really, but we were. In my village, where I lived before I moved to town, they kind of called me their English person, I was their English woman so I felt kind of part of it but not part of it but, you know. And they thought I was eccentric, my goats escaped and everything. I’d be a bit the joke of the village but it didn’t matter, I am used to it, and it was OK. (Linda, 2014, 1 184-189)

Linda seems to have been known in the village for her eccentricity which raises the issue of national stereotypes. In my experience, English people are often stereotyped as eccentric in France. In the last quote, Linda seems to suggest that she was not affected by the way she was treated in the village when she says “it didn’t matter, I am used to it, and it was OK”. However, in the following quote when she says “I won’t be foreign anymore”

when she chose to live in a town where she felt at home, Linda seems to imply that she had indeed felt foreign in France which might have affected her emotionally.

And I was attracted thinking, I won't be foreign anymore. But I knew that Amy was French really, for all intents and purposes, and I couldn't see her fitting in with what I knew about the schools here. (Linda, 2014, 1 206-208)

The last quote also reveals how integration was a concern for Linda when she talks about her daughter. Linda reports that she had concerns about her daughter's integration in England because she thought that her daughter was culturally French. For Linda, Amy spoke French, had French friends and behaved as any other French youngster. So, it seems that for Linda it would be difficult for her daughter to fit in if she did not share the same national culture as her peers.

Linda's difficulties in integrating could be due to the locations she chose to live in. Linda reports that she had moved several times in France following her divorce and ensuing search for work. Linda and her daughter lived in very small places. In the following quote, Linda talks about the difficulty of integrating into one of the villages she lived in because of the homogeneity of its population. Linda talks about the bullying that took place in the village school and how it had affected her daughter. This would suggest that the village Linda tried to fit in was not receptive to newcomers.

She went to school near the village where I taught and that worked out. It sorts of worked out. It was a different kind of village from where she had gone too initially. And it had been an old village where most people worked in the paper mill. And there was a lot of bullying going on with the gipsy children and my daughter was not happy with all that but she then stayed in that school for quite a few years until we found a school she rather liked. (Linda, 2014, 1 104-109)

The issue of location seemed particularly challenging for another participant. As seen previously, Julie, an English woman, in Venezuela, reported having trouble in acquiring Spanish because she felt that her home was not located in a place that could facilitate her acquisition of Spanish.

I just dealt with market people or bus drivers and people who weren't educated because we lived in a fairly working class area of that town as well, so I did not get a lot of input... (Julie, 2013, 1 64-65)

In the last quote, Julie who was a teacher and was married to someone who was reportedly thinking that English imparted a higher social status, seemed to perceive the location she found herself in as not providing a satisfactory environment for her acquisition of Spanish. However, Julie's subsequent family arrangements might have exposed the

family as being different and made their social interaction with the community potentially difficult. In the following quote, Julie says that the family chose to live in a very remote location. As a result, Julie must have spent a lot of time alone with her children although she mentions that some people would visit. Julie talks about being seen as “hippies”, or, in other words, unconventional people who by definition do not want to fit in.

So, my daughter was born, and then we went to live in this very isolated area with literally no neighbours, up on top of a mountain. (Ah, Ah) ... People would visit the hippies (Ah, Ah). Yes. So, my son was eight and my daughter was born and my husband was working in another town, so I was alone with these two children up on top of this mountain. (Julie, 2013, 1 85-86, 1 88-90)

In the following quote, Julie also talks about her difficulties to integrate into her work environment. From what she says, Julie seemed to intentionally isolate herself from her colleagues by choosing to speak English only. She says that not speaking Spanish stopped her from socialising. It also made her missed out on all the formal and informal communication that could have helped her feel more integrated.

And on reflection, I realised how isolated I was from my colleagues at work because I spoke English at work because I had this rather limited view. I did not socialise, you see, in Spanish. So, I had this view that when I go to work, I must speak English. And everybody in the department spoke English because it was an English language department and the students all benefited from me speaking English and I spoke English to the students... (Julie, 2013, 1 227-232)

So, there were massive misunderstandings and you could put it down to language. Actually, just the fact that I wasn't speaking to anybody in Spanish, not picking up the gossip not picking up the rules I was just living this rather isolated life. (Julie, 2013, 1 450-453)

Julie gave a vivid example of how not speaking Spanish at work had resulted in her feeling isolated. In the following quote, Julie says that she missed a weekly staff meeting for six years because she had had no information in English about the meetings. She reflects that her colleagues might have misinterpreted her constant use of English and thought that she was deliberately distant.

My assumption that me speaking English at work was the best thing to do for everybody... it was only at the end that I realised that people thought I was standoffish. I was playing power games. I was not integrating. And, in fact, I had this moment one day I walked into, it was a room that led to the library and the whole staff, the whole department was sitting there. And they were obviously having a staff meeting and (Ah, Ah) I knew nothing about this staff meeting ... I just didn't know that there were regular staff meetings... but there was this whole world going on that I was completely unaware of. (Julie, 2013, 1 402-418)

In the last quote, Julie's colleagues seem to have interpreted Julie's use of English differently from Ramiro, Julie's husband, for whom English brought higher status as seen previously. Contrary to Ramiro, Julie's colleague might have thought that English was a power language but they did not seek to benefit from its status. According to Julie, her colleagues thought that Julie was playing power games. And in a sense, one might argue that Julie seemed to prove her colleagues right when she reported that she did not try to speak Spanish although she was aware that Spanish was actually the language of communication at work. In the following quote, Julie reports that, by deliberately missing the gossip in Spanish, that she seems to have a negative view of, she was isolating herself because gossip was a legitimate mean of communication in her workplace.

I don't know what happened. It was very strange. So, you know, there are whole areas of life that I was missing out on. The good part, though, is I missed out on all the gossip. So, I didn't know. I really didn't know because actually, gossip is what tells you what's really going on whatever the rules are. And I didn't gossip because I didn't speak Spanish. And so, I had no idea who was doing what or with whom or, absolutely you know. ... So, there were massive misunderstandings and you could put it down to language. Actually, just the fact that I wasn't speaking to anybody in Spanish, not picking up the gossip not picking up the rules I was just living this rather isolated life. (Julie, 2013, 1 422-453)

Julie's feelings of isolation culminated in a real feeling of rejection. In the following quote, Julie recalls experiencing feelings of rejection when no one came to say goodbye to her when she left her job because no one understood that she was actually leaving. This example seems to suggest that there seems to have been a total lack of communication between Julie and her colleagues.

And then, of course, nobody actually came to say goodbye to me when I left after 6 years. I don't think they knew I was leaving. I think they thought that I just got a year sabbatical which I didn't know I got either (Ah, Ah) I thought, I was clear I was leaving. I said I was leaving but they ask me to. sort of, to give a reason, you know, where I was going... I hadn't resigned apparently, I hadn't left so nobody wanted to come and say goodbye to me and I was a bit hurt I thought God, I hadn't realised that I was so unpopular. (Julie, 2013, 1 434-450)

Her colleagues did not understand that she was leaving her job for good as the following quote shows. However, the following quote is interesting because it shows that Julie was not unpopular at work although July might have thought that she was seen as aloof. Her colleagues tried to keep in touch with her.

But then afterwards I realised that because lots of people kept in touch with me and sent me emails and things and I think they thought I was just away for a year so

they wouldn't say goodbye would they when I hadn't gone, although I thought I'd gone. (Ah, Ah) (Julie, 2013, l 434-450)

Outsiders were not the only persons who could perceive the participants differently. The participants' own children could also perceive their parents as different. Some bilingual children in the study seem to have been sensitive to their parents' differences, maybe because the differences reflected on the children. As reported by some of the parents, some children in the study seemed to be embarrassed when their parents did not use the dominant language in public. In the following quote, Linda says that her daughter would react negatively when she used English, in public, in France. However, Linda explains that this might also have been due to a difference in personalities. Linda contrasts her own extrovert personality to her daughter's introvert personality.

But there were some times when she would get cross with me. So, for example, if we were in a queue in France, and I started talking to her in English, she would mind that because that would be embarrassing and she would want me to be quiet. And if we were that would basically be what she would be embarrassed for. Or she would, or even now if I start speaking in French, and it could easily, she would say, be quiet, don't talk but then she is. I am very chatty and she is a very discreet quiet person so... (Linda, l. 306-312)

### **8.3.2. Sounding or looking foreign**

Foreign accents were another sign of differences that were commented on by both parents and children in the data. The parents in the data acquired their second language as young adults and thus spoke the dominant languages with a foreign accent. This is consistent with findings on second language acquisition (Piller, 2002b, 2013). In the following quote, Cristina explains that she could not pass for an Englishwoman. She recalls a situation in which she was asked about her son's mother tongue because she thought she probably sounded foreign to her interlocutor. It could be suggested that these experiences were significant for the participants because they reminded them of their difference and that they were different from their children. Cristina talks about reflecting on her identity and her son's identity and how the two identities might diverge.

When we started visiting nurseries, one of the ladies at the nurseries, she quickly picked up that I was not a native English speaker, I don't know why (Ah, Ah) and she said "Well, what is his mother's tongue?" and I remember at the time thinking, that was when he was around one-year-old, ... and I said "well, we don't know yet, he does not say anything". Ah, Ah, I (with emphasis) speak Spanish but for me his mother's tongue, when I feel that he's going to be British and when he is asked "where are you from", he is British. He was born in the UK and his language will be English. (Cristina, 2014, l 321-328)

Some of the children found it hard to understand why their parents had foreign accents. In the following quote, Laurie, for example, seems convinced that her father deliberately spoke English with a French accent.

No, he speaks, no not in French no... No, I don't know. Not in particular. He has lived here too long. ... He is a bit more English now; he probably puts the accent on. (Ah, ah) (Laurie in Alain, 2013, 1 493-498)

Interestingly, foreign accents did not always signal the national identity that the participants wanted to convey. Marc talked of his French accent when he spoke English while he stated that he defined himself as Spanish.

I speak French. I have a French accent when I speak English. Everybody thinks that I am French, but I am not really French because, in fact, I am Spanish (Marc, 2014, 1 206-208).

The participants might also look different. As seen previously, Marc remarked that his wife “looks French, she speaks French, she dresses like a French woman”. However, it seems that for him his wife’s appearance is deceptive as he considers her only half-French. In the following quote, Alain’s daughter, Laurie reports that she started experiencing embarrassment around the age of eight when her family moved to a smaller town because her father looked different. Alain would wear a beret, which is a typical French accessory although it is mostly worn by older men. Like most children, Laurie seems to have wanted to fit in with her peer group.

Researcher, I just wanted to know what sort of experience you had in England with a French dad. Was it different from your friends’ experience?

Laurie, I suppose, at times, embarrassing because we’re probably the only one that did have, you know normally it is just...

Researcher, And when did you start being a bit embarrassed?

Laurie, At about 8-9. Yes. That’s, yeah.

Researcher, And why was it embarrassing, people would notice?

Laurie, No, when we were in London. Just because dad was different to the rest of the dads, I suppose. He would wear a “beret” (ah, ah)

(Laurie in Alain, 2013, 1.432-440)



The last example shows again the difficulty of fitting into smaller communities. However, not all the children in the study experienced embarrassment. Sophie, Isabelle's daughter, was not embarrassed by her mother's difference. She seemed happy to be heard speaking in French with her mother. Presumably, Sophie did not mind being perceived as different although she did not elaborate on why she liked it.

Researcher, Did it make you feel a bit different?

Sophie, Yes, and I liked it when we were in town that people could hear me and my mother speak in French.

Researcher, You did not feel a bit bothered to be different?

Sophie, No, I rather liked it. (Sophie, 2012, 1 127-131)

Lastly, parents might feel different because they looked different from their children. This was Cristina's case. In the following quote, Cristina discusses how her child did not look Spanish to her and she seems to struggle to define her feelings about it. She states that it is not sadness but seems unable to define her feeling more precisely and uses ill-defined expressions such as "a bit strange", "a bit odd", "not sure why". However, the fact that her child looks different seems to be an issue for her as a mother. Moreover, it could be suggested that it might make her feel isolated in her family in the UK as the only non-British member of her family.

But it does make me feel a little bit strange when I look at him and I think that he is not Spanish. Not sad, but a bit strange when I see him play or reading an English book or when I see him in the playground in Spain. You can so clearly see that he is not Spanish but at the moment he is so striking, his clothes... I don't know, there is something about him that you so clearly see that he is not one of those children. And it makes me feel a bit odd but I am not sure why. Not sad, just like he is not like me. Sometimes, I look at him and I feel that he is more like his father and because they are both British while I am not, it is a bit of a strange feeling. (Cristina, 2012, 1 288-297)

In the following quote, Cristina also expresses worries about missing out on sharing a language with her son. She compares herself to monolingual parents who share their languages with their children. She predicts that her son will probably have more in common with his father because they will share the same language. She anticipates that this will isolate her. As seen previously, Cristina seems to have many doubts about bilingualism and seems to struggle with the responsibility of the task of parenting a bilingual child.

But not, and that is strange for me that I will not have that with him while his father will because his father will share that language. It is just that feeling that we will

not be sharing this... So, I am kind of projecting what is happening now... But when I see my friends that are Spanish and have children in Spain with Spanish people, and I feel that they are sharing that with them, while I won't with my child and, on the other hand, I think Well, I had never thought about this before, it is that important? Maybe, I am just kind of getting things out of proportion because I am actually not very, yes, I am very obsessed with bilingualism. Well not very obsessed but, you know, I keep reading a lot about bilingualism and how to... (Cristina, 2012, 1 328-341)

However, feelings of isolation based on language as well as nationality could affect both parents and children. Cristina expected that her son, who would live in England and be dominant in English, might also feel isolated within his extended family in Spain. Cristina's family had experienced migration but all its members spoke Spanish as a first language. According to Cristina, her son would be a "proper foreigner" within her family.

You do feel kind of a bit apart but I think that's because he is going to be a foreigner. It does not matter how you look at it. He is not Spanish. He just comes from a Spanish background. And also, my family situation, because they all emigrated. Many of them married people from South America, for example... So that mixture of people, who speak in Spanish, and in Galician. It is quite common in my family... I don't think he will be; he will feel single out excessively because that is quite common in the make-up of my family... He will be the only proper, not Spanish person... He will be the only proper foreigner but I don't think, if he speaks Spanish, I don't think he will notice that he has been left out but I don't know. We will see. (Cristina, 2012, 1 190-203)

In short, the participants talked about issues of integration and identity. The parents who spoke the heritage language and had moved abroad, could be perceived as different in their new environment and this could make their integration difficult. They sometimes behaved differently or had different looks and a foreign accent. In addition, some parents seemed to exacerbate their differences by behaving in ways that seemed to send an ambiguous signal about their willingness to socialise and integrate into their new communities, including workplaces. The children could also be different from the parents of the heritage language and culture and this could lead to parents to worry about their own identities and that of their children. It was difficult for some parents to deal with the fact that their children were different and that these differences may grow in the future.

### **8.3.3. Socialising in new environments**

Moving to new countries involved issues of socialisation of the participants. These issues have already been touched upon when I examined Julie's difficulties in fitting in at work. Socialising seemed to be an issue for most of the participants. In the data, there was evidence that socialising in a different country could be difficult and potentially isolating.

The participants talked about building new social networks in their new countries and fitting in.

### **8.3.3.1. Meeting and relating with new people**

Migrating to another country seems to have been experienced as socially isolating. Linda, for example, talked about the necessity for people who moved abroad to build new social networks and about the loneliness of migration. In the following quote, Linda says her daughter's childhood experience of migration has taught her that she would need to establish social connections each time she moved. According to Linda, Amy learned that she was free to choose where she wanted to live. This would suggest that Amy also learned not to establish solid roots. It could be suggested that at times, Amy might have experiences loneliness because she moved several times during her childhood. However, for Linda, the loneliness of migrating might have taught Amy the value of languages to be able to connect in a different country.

Except that, Amy has understood the loneliness of it. So, she likes it but then you end up on your own until you make the next connections. So, I think she could be living anywhere. She is, what she has understood is that you are not bound by where you grew up, you can go to another place, she absolutely knows the value of languages and she is completely trilingual. (Linda, 2014, 1 374-379)

Several of the participants in the study discussed meeting new people. To break social isolation and to encourage bilingualism, some of the families made initial attempts to meet other families with the same languages. This was very instrumental and aimed at enabling their children to socialise in the heritage languages. However, several participants highlighted the unnaturalness of trying to socialise with people for the sake of language.

In the following quote, Isabelle reports that it did not feel right to meet French people just because they spoke French and she even compares the experience to the experience of joining a sect. However, in the following quote, Isabelle does not rule out meeting French people. She points out that nowadays she meets French people through the social connections she already has. This suggests that members of the same national communities tend to congregate when they live abroad.

At first, I tried to meet other French now I don't try anymore. But through other French people, one meets others. There were meetings of French people that I attended. I don't go anymore because I feel weird. I feel it's like a sect or ... you know (laughs) (Isabelle, 2011, 1 147-151)

In the following quote, Cristina also highlights the unnaturalness of meeting people for the sake of language. She states that it is easier and more natural to join established groups rather than trying to meet individuals although none of my participants seemed to have tried to join an established existing community.

I think it is a bit difficult if there is a group, an established group and you come along. Then it is different but if not, then you end up trying to find people who just happen to speak the same language but you might not have anything in common. The children might not get on at all. I did try that but it did feel quite forced “Oh let’s meet up so we can speak Spanish”. But then what do you talk about? I did not feel comfortable. (Cristina, 2012, 1 500-504)

Cristina also highlights an extra difficulty in trying to find other families speaking the same language. The children need to have the same language.

We have. I have very few Spanish friends in the UK and the ones I have are in London and don’t have children which is an issue. I tried to get in touch with Spanish people around where I live but it did not really work out... (Cristina, 2012, 1 91-93)

However, some of the parents had a need to meet with speakers of their first languages. The issue of not being able to speak one’s first language was not straightforward and, at times, the participants in the study seemed to say complex things about language. In the following quote, Isabelle who did not seem to have an issue with speaking in English with her husband, Andie, reports that she nevertheless missed speaking French when she started living with him in England. Without French, Isabelle says that she felt isolated emotionally and she explains this in term of intimacy. Thus, Isabelle seems to associate her first language with intimacy. It seems that in English, Isabelle could not find the kind of intimacy that she was craving and that she associated with communicating with French female friends. The lack of intimacy Isabelle talks about seems to have a lot to do with the gender of her interlocutors. Isabelle seems to find that men are less openly emotional than women are and this is the reason why she had felt the need to share her emotions with French female friends.

And after that, when I was with him and that I was if you want, removed from all that was familiar before, suddenly I realized that there was something that I missed, a part of me that I missed, and when I was looking for girlfriends, I thought to find someone I could confide in... Anyway, with guys, there is less talk of emotions already, my husband, he says that he doesn’t have any, he is pretending. I know he has a few (Ah, Ah). But with girlfriends, it is true that at first, I thought that if I was going to make myself really understand it had to be someone in French and I thought it was not just because of the language but I

thought that the kind of emotions that I had were French emotions... I felt if you want that there was a French personality that it was a bit of a cultural personality, that there were things that I felt that maybe an English woman would not feel. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 440-455)

In the last quote, Isabelle also attributes her need to speak in French to having a French cultural personality. Isabelle seems to be saying that language is embedded with emotional and cultural references that seem unavailable through a second language. And she directly talks about the “French emotions” that she needed to express in French to someone of the same gender and the same linguistic and cultural background as hers.

Culture was very important for Isabelle. In the following quote, Isabelle explains that she had felt the need to meet French people when she moved to England because it was essential for her to keep her culture. Isabelle talks about the importance of keeping her first language and culture because she feels that both have been determining in forming her identity. She says that French was the language of her childhood and had thus formed her identity. Somehow, it seems that for Isabelle, the concept of “mother-tongue” with all its affective connotations really stood for “childhood-tongue” and that letting go of French was akin to letting go of her childhood.

I was trying to find something from my childhood or I was trying to find myself maybe and when you meet someone that's never like you... (Isabelle, 2011, 1 442-444)

Yeah, I have the impression that language and childhood, it's very connected if you want. I thought that for me, what was left of me, what had formed me was that, it was that, this French culture, the French language well it is not wrong but it was important, it was something I wanted to keep that I was afraid to lose. I think that we are all afraid of losing our childhood so emotionally it meant that I think the relationship between language and childhood. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 474-479)

However, Isabelle also commented on how her experience of living abroad had changed her identity and that she had experienced a change in her emotions that went from “French emotions” to “English emotions”. In the following quote, Isabelle talks about having a very good French girlfriend and some very good English, which demonstrated that she had become able to share her emotions in other languages other than French.

Besides, I have changed. I have become more English too... maybe I have developed English emotions I don't know but in any case, my way of thinking has changed. Now I don't have the impression that a girlfriend must be English or French or any nationality, in fact, it sure it's easier to understand each other when we both speak the same language but not always, now that I am working with a lot of foreigners... so anyway this belief that I had at the beginning it has changed now I do not try to make French friends although at the beginning I was trying to

meet French people and then often I was disappointed because they were not people like me. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 430-440)

In the last quote, Isabelle reflects that the nationality of the people she met has become less important to her and that she can now communicate with a wider range of people. Therefore, it seems that time and lengths of residency in another country and use of another language have had an impact on Isabelle's views of socialisation.

With age, Isabelle reports being less emotional and this affects the new friendships she is forming. She is less interested in sharing her emotions and more in doing things with people. And this might be due to the evolution of Isabelle's identity. In the last quote, Isabelle reports becoming more English.

I think that anyway I was more emotional before... I am more balanced emotionally I think and so for me, it has become the most important thing. A friend is not necessarily someone to share emotions with. Now, it is another thing, it is mostly about doing stuff together, to have a common interest, well it is true that I also consider that it is someone I can call to give good or bad news, you know, it's someone who knows my life a little bit...so there are fewer emotions. I think it is the stuff of youth. (Isabelle, 2011, 1 479-488)

On the other hand, Julie seems to have experienced an increased need to share her emotions after her divorce. In the following quote, Julie reports that Spanish became her "language of the heart". Julie felt a need to talk about her personal problems in Spanish because she had no English interlocutors to share her problems with. This shows that Julie's use of language to express emotions could be fluid and evolved following changes in her life circumstances. She just needed to communicate.

I became very fluent because I talked so much about my personal problems to friends. This is why I talked about the language of the heart. It actually changed and it was much easier for me to talk about my feelings in Spanish that it was for me to talk about my feelings in English. Because I did not talk to anybody of my feelings in English, because I didn't know anybody to talk English so I talked Spanish. (Julie, 2013, 1 218-226)

Paradoxically, it is when Julie was able to communicate fully in Spanish that she seems to have realised how isolated she had become socially. She attributes this isolation partly to Venezuelan culture. Julie thought that she would not be able to fit in Venezuela because she had become a single mother in a country that was very family-oriented.

As my Spanish improved I realised how isolated I was because then I was capable of mixing with people and I did. I wasn't completely isolated... and I had friends that I would go and see but not many and then I realised how much I was missing... I had been isolated and I had not noticed. ... then I thought, well what sort of life is

this for a single woman where there is no social life for single women in Venezuela, not really. (Julie, 2013, 1 455-462)

Like Julie in Venezuela, Linda also experienced feeling isolated socially in France when she became a single mother because the French culture was also family-oriented and Sundays were dedicated to family and close friends as she says in the following quote. So, when she was on her own on Sundays, Linda reports feeling lonely because she could not socialise.

But it was just really at the weekend that it was a bit lonely because French people don't really invite you around on Sundays because they are having their family birthdays with whoever and that kind of things. But she (Amy) could be with her dad. (Linda, 2014, 1 166-176)

Equally, living in a small town could be socially limiting for a single parent, like Linda, who struggled to juggle work and study without a social network that could help her look after her daughter. In the following quote, Linda talks about having abandoned her plans to go to university because she was not able to arrange night-time childcare.

I tried to go to University to do a master for a bit but with Amy being like 13, it wasn't really possible because I had to stay the night. It all went a bit pear-shaped. (Linda, 2014, 1 199-204)

It is only when Linda moved to a bigger town that she was able to go out and socialise. Moving to a bigger town gave both Linda and her daughter more independence and a relative feeling of integration. However, in the following quote, Linda relativizes the scale of her integration by saying that she was "kind of" integrated. This would suggest that she might have found her integration still problematic.

So, we moved to that town, and I, and then she could walk everywhere ... she did the last year of primary on her own and she did things and I then worked in an institution, and I had 35 colleagues and I was there and she was there and then we were kind of integrated. (Linda, 2014, 1 179-184)

In short, the parents who moved abroad had to create a new social network. At first, the parents tried to make friends with people of the same linguistic background. They thought that it would benefit their children's bilingualism. However, most parents in the study had difficulties meeting people they really liked based on a common language. Some parents seemed to have a strong emotional need to continue to share their language and culture. Their language was part of their identity. Thus, risking losing the first language was running the risk of losing their formative identities. However, the parents' identities and needs in term of socialisation were fluid and changed over time. Following important

changes in life circumstances, there were also shifts in their use of language to express emotions. The mothers in the study who became single parents were more at risk of feeling isolated because they lived in societies that were quite family-oriented.

### **8.3.3.2. Socializing in school**

My participants seemed to attach a particular importance to school as seen in chapter seven. What they say about the process of socialisation through school seem to be equally relevant to this chapter. In the next section, I examine how in the school environment, cultural differences could produce feelings of isolation for both the children and the parents of the heritage languages.

As examined in the previous chapter, both Amy and Laura, two English-speaking children started nursery school in France and Venezuela with no apparent knowledge of the dominant languages. They seem to have had trouble adjusting to school in France and Venezuela. They seem to have gone through a silent phase that might have felt isolating for them.

However, Amy's school experience is worth revisiting, in this section, for what it reveals about socialisation through school. In the following quote, Linda, Amy's mother, talks about the French school system. She talks about how she was impressed by how it equipped the children not only with language skills but also with social skills. Linda explains that for her, school served as a social leveller in France. This seems to align with the rationale of the education system of the French République. Linda says that she also bases her opinion on her more recent professional experiences as a therapist. However, although Linda seems to have had a good opinion of the French school system, her use of the rather pejorative "indoctrinate" seems ambiguous. It seems to suggest that Linda thought that her daughter was indoctrinated in France. However, Linda seems very complimentary about the French way of socialising children.

This is one of my fundamental beliefs; the value of that free "maternelle" was incredible. And that's, I have people come for counselling, French, from very poor background... To me, when they went to this "maternelle", they have an arrangement, a sort of social arrangement how you behave, all indoctrinated into ... She went there from two and a half. She had to have an afternoon nap. She ate with them. She did everything and it was pleasant. So, she kind of acquired these habits. ... I think that was invaluable and that's something that is not provided here... Whatever they do, here, is not apt to that standard of all day long from morning to 6 of stable input on how to be. (Linda, 2014, 1 320-332)

In the following quote, Linda talks about the moment when she realised that her daughter's background was very different from the background of the other schoolchildren.



Linda reports that at Christmas, she felt “shocked” about the way the French celebrated Christmas in a secular country. In the quote, Linda talks about realising that the values that Amy might acquire in the French school would be different from her own British values.

I was quite shocked the first year because, for example, you know, all she did at Christmas was about singing about jolly Christmas tree and stuff and “Petit Papa Noel” and nothing about Jesus or anything like that... So, I found that quite interesting and different, the culture, you know the whole culture. So, I realised quite early on that she was going into a world where everyone had a completely vastly different background to her. (Linda, 2014, 1 42-47)

The age of migration has an influence on acculturation (Berry et al., 2006). Amy arrived in France at a very young age and would normally have been expected to assimilate to the host culture relatively quickly. Thus, theoretically, Amy’s cultural background would evolve quickly while Linda as an adult might take longer to adjust to French culture.

In her interview, Linda reported mediating a great deal with the schools her daughter attended. Linda seemed overprotective of her daughter. In the following quote, for example, Linda talks about school dinners. In French schools, either the children eat their lunches on the premises (“cantine”), or they go home for lunch. Linda tried to mediate with the school to provide her daughter with packed lunches as it is customary in the UK. Linda reports that she was not sure whether this was a personal or cultural issue although she seems to describe it in terms of cultural differences. Linda’s position on hot meals might seem contradictory because as a mother she seemed to have the same philosophy as the school and seemed to value good nutritious meals for her daughter at home. It could be suggested that Linda’s might have raised Amy’s expectations of packed lunches as in my experience, French children usually adjust well to school dinners even when their mothers cook at home.

And there were a few conflicts with, I think, the way I was bringing her up and the way of the school. I think the small cultural thing was, no actually, it was kind of, it wasn’t cultural. I suppose it was a personal choice but I always cook everything myself. ... So, Amy with the school dinners, god knows what she would have done in England but with the school dinners, which you have to have, she really did not like... She thought it was all disgusting and some day she would only eat the piece of bread and a bit of chocolate and maybe a bit of bread at lunch and that’d be it. So, I asked for her to have packed lunch and they refused. You cannot have packed lunch because a child has to have a proper meal. (Linda, 2014, 1 126-138)

Linda gave several other examples of what might be cultural differences that she found significant in her daughter’s French school experiences. It seems that Linda kept comparing the British and French school system. In the following quote, Linda reports that her daughter skipped a class in primary school, which is a common practice in France for

advanced pupils so they do not get bored in class. However, Linda expresses doubts about the practice and says that her daughter was actually bored in school. Linda explains that the reason why Amy was bored was a lack of creativity in the school she attended.

Everything went very well and, in fact, she ended up “jumping a year” which was probably a mistake because she did get slightly bored with her work. I was quite shocked. That was the thing. I liked the solidity of it but when she came out one day with a clown printout that had been coloured, and I remember saying “Oh, that’s lovely!” and then, all the other children came out and they all had the clown and everyone’s clown had been coloured the same, I thought “Oh, my god!” this isn’t very creative... (Linda, 2014, 1 64-69)

Linda then talks about how creative her own English workshops were thus seemingly pointing out the superiority of British educational methods.

Later when I run a group for children... the children would be able to choose what colour to colour things, they asked, what colour, what colour? And I was “no, you’re going to choose, you’re going to choose them”, and it was quite exciting ... And children loved it because they had never had all these materials, free for all, to do things... So, I kind of got all the culture difference and there were lots of things I liked and some things I found restrictive. (Linda, 2014, 1 70-77)

In the following quote, Linda comments on how she objected to the French system of marking because she thought the system was demotivating. Linda uses emotive language like “quite sad” and “disenchanted”. However, Linda shows that she could compromise when she chose to keep her daughter in the French system when she could have opted out. Linda put the educational interest of her daughter first as she considered that French standards were higher. Therefore, if on one hand, Linda seems to have a positive opinion of the French system that she perceived as solid and beneficial for the acquisition of language and socialisation, on the other hand, she thought the French system was uninspiring.

I looked at the international school and I thought the standards seemed quite low compared to what she had been doing in her French school ... Then I found it quite sad the way the French system works with a negative marking scheme where you start with 20 and you take away rather than start with 0 and building up your points (Ah, Ah) and that really, she got quite disenchanted with that... (Linda, 2014, 1 84-91)

In the following quote, Linda says that as a teenager, Amy could no longer cope with school in France. However, when she moved to the UK, Amy, who had only experienced the French education system, also struggled in adjusting to school life in the UK. Linda reports that, in England, Amy missed important cultural components of the French system such as its comprehensiveness. In addition, Amy seemed to find it hard to relate to British

young people. For Linda, Amy was behaving as a French person, which would tend to show that Amy, who had been socialised in France, might have been well integrated into France.

She just didn't like going to the school where there were only girls. She didn't like the all restrictive nature of it and she didn't like the fact that it wasn't fair. She is French. (Ah, Ah) Really she liked the fact that the school where everyone went there and it was her first school, she didn't like this idea of being selected and she found it all a bit strange; like the girls would put the curtains in the 6th form room so they couldn't see each other spots, something like that. When she went out, the boys wouldn't talk to you unless they had drunk 10 pints ... You know, it was a bit strange. (Linda, 2014, 1 225-235)

However, in the following quote, Linda wonders whether her daughter's difficulties in integrating into England could be due to a question of personality. Linda describes her daughter as a non-conformist.

She wasn't really a conformist. She didn't readily conform. So, she found that quite hard, you know, and I think that really that's what wasn't good... And so, we came back here. And that was it. And then, she hated it from the beginning. (Linda, 2014, 1 254-259)

Amy seems to have taken advantage of Linda's willingness to support her at all costs. And Linda comments that in retrospect Amy would have liked to have had a less understanding mother.

She now tells me she thinks she was spoilt and I think spoilt in the sense that if she said something I would listen to her and try to work it out... I think she is cross with me that I listened to her and that I shouldn't have listened to a child, and I should have been in charge and I should have said we stayed in France. (Linda, 2014, 1 246-247, 1 361-362)

Amy might have needed to find her own voice when she was growing up. Moving to France was her parents' choice and she had had no say in the matter when she was two. Since then, she had been uprooted several times through changes of residence and school. Therefore, as a teenager, Amy might have needed to stand against her mother and finally, make her own choice.

Sophie also said that she had mixed feelings about her mother working as a French teacher in her school because of the duality of her roles as pupil and daughter. Sophie talked about feeling protective of her mother because she was aware that other children might not like her because for them she was just a teacher. This meant that Sophie had to stand out against her peers to defend her mother. Therefore, it seems that the experience of having her mother working in school could be rather isolating for Sophie.

I thought she was a good teacher but all the time there are children who are not going to like a teacher, if I heard that there was a friend of mine who had a problem with my mother or, it annoyed me because I knew she was a good person and that we were having fun together but at school she had to be a teacher... This annoyed me sometimes because I did not like people to speak badly about my mother. ... I did not like her being in my school. If I did something, my teacher would tell her and she would see me with some of my friends, and if she did not like them, Nah, Nah, Nah ... (Sophie, 2012, 1 267-279).

Additionally, Sophie did not like the way her mother could monitor her every move in school. Isabelle could monitor Sophie's social interactions and this suggests that Isabelle's presence might have been inhibitory and made Sophie feel different from her peers.

In short, I examined how Linda, as an English mother, seemed to have struggled with cultural differences in schools. Linda compared the school systems in France and in the UK and attributed Amy's dissatisfaction with school to cultural differences in terms of choices. Although Linda liked some elements of the French education system, she had strong views and expectations of schools that seem to be based on her previous experiences of life in the UK. I chose to present these two school experiences in this chapter because they seem to me very revealing of how everyday life contexts can trigger emotional responses in parents and children. These responses can be exacerbated by differences of culture and language. These experiences affect not only the way bilinguals perceive the culture in which they live but also their intimate relationship within the families. These experiences also interested me because they are very challenging to examine. They mix elements of language, culture and emotions. They also show how unique everyday experiences can be for bilingual families and how the emotional impact can differ according to individual experiences.

#### **8.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined how the participants experienced bilingualism emotionally in their everyday life. I looked at what the participants said about how they actually used languages in their families, how they integrated into their new environments and how they created new social networks and socialised.

First, the study of language use in the family revealed that parents of the heritage languages felt very responsible for the transmission of their first languages to their children and made a lot of efforts in order to make sure that their children received enough language input. At times, these attempts seemed to isolate the parents of the heritage language from the rest of their family especially if they felt that they could not rely on their spouses to

support bilingualism or on their children not to speak the dominant language. It could result in parents of the heritage language feeling excluded at home. However, the reasons why this affected them so strongly seemed very complex and seem to have to do with what constituted first languages for some of the participants. The parents of the heritage languages tended to identify strongly with their first languages. Some participants even talked about having a different cultural identity when they were speaking different languages. One parent also talked about the nationality of her emotions and how she expressed emotions differently through language. Furthermore, the emotional significance of languages seemed to have to do with how the participants view first languages as formative and thus part of their identities. Therefore, one of the main issues for some of the parents of the heritage languages was that their bilingual children would grow up to be different from them if they did not succeed in transmitting their first languages. However, the parents also discussed how their stay abroad had affected their cultural identities and how the use of languages to express emotions had changed over time. Julie, for example, talked about feeling less English when speaking Spanish, her second language, and Isabelle talked about being less emotional in French, her first language, as she grew older.

When they first arrived in the new countries, some parents who spoke the heritage language tried to make contacts with people of the same linguistic background in order to encourage their children's bilingualism and because they had a need to continue to share their first languages emotionally. Very few parents succeeded in creating relationships solely based on a common heritage language. In general, the parents of the heritage languages seem to have had some issues of integration in their new environments because they might have felt that others perceived them as culturally different. In turn, not feeling fully integrated might have had an emotional impact on them resulting in feelings of exclusion. Lastly, the children of bilingual parents might sometimes resent being different through their parents' differences.

During the interviews, the participants described their experiences with a lot of details but seldom analysed what was really happening to them although Julie had reflected on issues of power, identity and loss and offered an interpretation. She had also reflected on how spending twenty years abroad had changed her as a person and she seemed to have regrets about what might have been her life if she had not divorced. Linda, who was also experienced in interpreting her experiences, seemed at times rather vague about the emotional impact of her experiences but this vagueness seemed to me quite revealing of a lot of emotions about moving back to England and losing the French identity that she had constructed in France. Most participants had experienced emotions linked to familial

bilingualism but ethically, it was difficult to prompt the participants too much about their emotions.

In this chapter, emotion and the expression of emotions in several languages are key concepts of the literature of emotion and bilingualism that are taken up. The findings aligned with research from Pavlenko (2008), Dewaele (2010), Kramsch (2009) and showed the emotional complexity of acquiring and transmitting heritage languages. The findings also highlighted how bilingual phenomena such as attrition and fossilisation could affect bilinguals emotionally (Grosjean, 2014).

## Chapter nine

### Discussion and conclusions

In research, bilingualism and multilingualism need to be studied as experience, and experiences need to be studied holistically and multidimensionally. Identifying overall patterns and analysing the details of interactional episodes are useful and necessary. But they need to be contextualised within the broader experiences of individuals, families and communities concerned. Whilst we celebrate the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism, we should avoid romanticising them, or seeing them as universally positive experiences. Bilingualism and multilingualism are a reality in contemporary society. They are also a challenge to us all. (Hua Zhu and Li Wei, 2016, p.11)

#### 9.1. Introduction

In this qualitative study, I examined the “lived experiences” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Husserl, 1999, Burkitt, 2003) of seven members of different bilingual families. Having experienced familial bilingualism, I was interested in understanding what it meant for mixed-nationality families to parent or be parented bilingually. This led me to adopt an interpretative approach using grounded theory and phenomenology methods to try to construct meaning from the narratives of my participants.

Studying the participants’ contextualised experiences helped me to better comprehend my participants’ understanding of familial bilingualism. In their unstructured interviews, my participants talked about various aspects of familial bilingualism which related to language ideologies, family language policies and emotions. The participants talked about their motivation to learn and transmit languages, the value they ascribed to languages, the issues and challenges they faced in developing familial bilingualism socially and how they experienced familial bilingualism emotionally.

Although they might appear to form a homogeneous group, my participants had experiences of familial bilingualism which were very diverse. However, these experiences seemed to share some aspects that I would like to discuss in this chapter because they helped me to answer the three questions of the thesis.

In this concluding chapter, I first present a summary of the key findings and contributions of the thesis. I then present the main findings of the thesis to the fields of familial bilingualism, language ideologies, family language policies and emotions. I then

examine the shortcoming of the thesis and finally, I offer some directions for future research.

### **9.3. Contributions of the thesis**

The topic of familial bilingualism is very complex. However, I hope that my findings can make a modest contribution to the study of bilingualism by documenting lived experiences of familial bilingualism and examining the fields of language ideologies, language acquisition and family language policies. As De Houwer (2009b) has also shown in her work, raising children bilingually is challenging and very complex emotionally. My findings also suggest that the parents in the study regarded raising their children bilingually as important and beneficial in equipping their children with valuable social capital that came from speaking more than one language.

I also hope that my study demonstrates in a modest way the value of cross-disciplinary research. My study draws on the work of King and Fogle (2006a) about the linguistic, psychological and emotional stakes in parenting bilingual children and being a good parent. It also draws on the work of Pavlenko (2008a) and Kramsch (2009a) which shows the need to integrate emotion into research on bilingualism and in the negotiation of bilingual identities. In the study, I incorporated a sociolinguistic perspective in which bilinguals were considered social actors and bilingualism was considered as a socially constructed phenomenon. The area of investigation in childhood bilingualism and emotion is of interest and value to the field of bilingualism as well as culture and identity studies, especially today with the expanding linguistic diversity in populations through global movement. At a practical level, one can see the value of such research with reference to the increasing numbers of bilingual pupils in UK schools, for example.

### **9.4. Main findings of the thesis**

#### **9.4.1. Findings on language ideology**

In this section, I try to answer the first question of the study which was “how do bilingual families perceive, value and understand themselves as bilingual families?” To answer this question, which related to the language beliefs of my participants, I first examined what my participants said about becoming bilingual and wanting to transmit heritage languages to their children. I then examined how the participants seemed to construe languages as capital.



#### **9.4.1.1. Lack of knowledge about bilingualism and familial bilingualism**

To start with, my participants' bilingualism was chosen. It could thus be considered elitist because the participants did not actually need to be bilingual to function in the monolingual communities in which they lived. Therefore, I started by examining the motivation of my participants to become bilingual and found that what they said about bilingualism showed some misconceptions about bilingualism likened to myths in the literature of bilingualism (Grosjean, 2010, 2015).

My findings showed that most of the parent participants were functioning in a monolingual mode at home and tended to use monolingualism as their yardstick to describe their own bilingualism and monitor their children's language acquisition. Participants like Julie and Marc for example, seemed to believe that bilingualism meant a perfect competence in two languages. Consequently, my participants were generally reluctant to refer to themselves as bilingual. Even Julie, who had more knowledge of bilingualism, insisted that she was not bilingual although she stated that she could pass for a native speaker on the phone and use Spanish in her everyday life when she lived in Venezuela. For Julie, bilingualism was only achievable if you were born in a bilingual family or resided abroad which had been the case of most participants. The participants self-reported various forms of bilingualism ranging from receptive bilingualism (Cristina and Marc in childhood) to various degrees of fluency. They mostly use the term "bilingual" when they were talking about their children. In addition, the parent participants all seemed to be aware that their language competence varied following changes in life circumstances such as moving countries (Bialystok, 2015; Grosjean, 2015). Both Isabelle and Julie discussed the phenomenon of language attrition and fossilization. Code-switching was mentioned as a way for children to deal with lack of vocabulary in one of their languages.

Sometimes, the participants' lack of knowledge about bilingualism seemed to have been reinforced by the advice offered by speech therapists. Cristina, for example, was advised to refrain from code-switching with her son. However, there was a demand for information on familial bilingualism. A parent, like Cristina, who had not reported a positive experience of childhood familial bilingualism, seemed to have more concerns and be in demand for information. On the other hand, Marc and Isabelle, who had reported positive experiences of childhood bilingualism, seemed more serene about implementing familial bilingualism. And in this respect, my study seems to confirm that family language policies can be influenced by the beliefs parents have about their ability to transmit languages (Spolsky, 2004) and their personal experiences of learning and using languages (De Houwer, 2009b).

Although they seemed to highly value language competence, most of the parent participants, learned their second language informally although the participants also showed they were rather resourceful in acquiring their second languages, using therapy for example. The participants seemed to believe that you acquire language through communication and use of the language socially. Julie and Linda seemed to hint at having struggled to acquire their second languages because they did not have many opportunities to practice these languages socially. Equally, this might be the reason why the parents seemed to expect their children to acquire the heritage languages naturally through communicating at home. If on one hand, the participants seemed concerned about providing enough language input to their children, they often seemed to underestimate the quantity of language input that their children received or would receive in the heritage language (De Houwer, 1999, 2006, 2007). Cristina, who was a receptive bilingual child, even seemed to think that her son would acquire Galician, a regional language, although he would hear that language only sporadically when on holiday. Likewise, Marc insisted on how easy it would be for his children to learn French because they had a French father although he admitted that they might not receive enough input in that language.

#### **9.4.1.2. Languages construed as capital**

At home, there was not a real communication need for the parent participants to raise their children bilingually because the parents were all competent speakers of the dominant languages. Although they were living in monolingual environments, all the participants seemed to have taken for granted that moving to a country implied learning its language whatever the need they had for this language.

While the participants talked about their emotional needs to speak their languages with their children, they seemed to have an additional motivation to transmit the heritage languages. Through bilingualism, the parent participants seemed to want to provide extra opportunities for their children (King and Fogle, 2006a; Piller, 2001). They seemed aware that their heritage languages were elite languages that would enable their children to study, work and possibly live in the countries of their choices. Therefore, like King and Fogle's participants (2006a), the parent participants could be viewed as "actively fostering" elite bilingualism which "is now part of middle-class and mainstream parenting practices" (Ibid. p. 707) because there seems to be a societal consensus that the transmission of elitist languages is good for the children. Therefore, the parent participants in the study, who were well-educated although not necessarily elite, might have felt they had no choice but to transmit their first languages.

My study is thus informed by Bourdieu's (2001) sociological theories of habitus, social and cultural capital as this helped me to make sense of one of the motivations of the families to raise their children bilingually. By bringing together the cultural and socioeconomic aspects of class, Bourdieu's work is useful to understand the mechanisms by which class is reproduced through formal and informal education and the major role families play in providing children with cultural capital that enables them to do well in life. Today, Bourdieu's ideas inform much of the framework for language commoditisation discussions. In this study, bilingualism could enable the second generation to retain or improve their social positions. Transmitting an elite language could thus be construed as transmitting a Bourdieusian social and cultural capital. And indeed, from the way they talked about their experiences, some parents in the study seemed to be on a mission to transmit a capital to their children. This seemed particularly the case of Marc. And like Marc, the parents in the study also seemed to value education highly which is a value that generally ranks high among immigrants (Kristeva, 2014). It is also generally seen as a middle-class aspiration.

The thread linking bilingualism, society, and power permeated a lot of my data. It has been argued that there is an increasing "capitalistic" attitude today towards bilingualism (Nino-Murcia and Rothman, 2008). Incidentally, the analogy to the stock market can also be useful to understand the fluctuating value of languages in the context of this study. For example, Galician which was not valued until the mid-seventies is now a more socially accepted language. In the study, Cristina expected her son to acquire Galician while she had been a reluctant learner herself when Galician was not valued socially. Equally, English has now become the power language of our new globalised world and research on power language show, for example, how English has become the preferred language of groups of mixed families (Fell, 2012).

The parents in the study might have been doubly aware that the languages they were trying to transmit to their children were valuable in society since they had themselves benefited from them. It could also be suggested that Julie and Linda who experienced family breakups were made even more aware of the social benefits of bilingualism when they temporarily experienced a real or perceived decrease in their social status when they moved back to their countries of origins and lost some of the social prestige that they had gained abroad.

## **9.4.2. Findings on family language policies**

This section provides some answers to the second question of the study which was “what are the challenges and issues in developing bilingual families and family language policies?” These challenges and issues were related to the language policies or rather the difficulties that the families in the study encountered in planning for familial bilingualism and implementing the OPOL approach.

### **9.4.2.1. Lack of general knowledge about family language policies**

To start with, the parents in the study did not seem to have much information about the processes and challenges of raising their children bilingually. They seemed to rely on their own ideas about what worked for them. This reflects King and Fogle’s study (2006a) that parents of bilingual children seem to get their knowledge of familial bilingualism either from their own experiences, other’s people experiences or from resources such as books and increasingly from the internet. In their study, King and Fogle (2006a) show that families can use personal sources as points of references. Additionally, having a previous experience of familial bilingualism could help participants, like Isabelle for example, to reject expert advice or make different decisions from those of other bilingual parents.

The participants in the study were rather individualistic. They did not try to join large communities who spoke their first languages. They tried to meet individuals or other parents who spoke the same heritage languages but except for Isabelle, it was mostly to fulfil the linguistic needs of their children.

### **9.4.2.2. Defensiveness about the OPOL approach**

At first, the parents in the study seemed to have improvised as they went along as their main motivation was to speak their first languages with their children. All the participants seemed to know about the “one parent, one language” approach and seemed to think that it was theoretically the best method. However, there was also a lack of information about the practicalities of the strategies to implement to form a bilingual family. It is not clear how much the participants were prepared for the demands of the OPOL approach or whether the method often failed because of its rigidity (De Houwer, 2009b).

The parents in the study tended to be defensive about the OPOL approach and their attempts to stick to that method, possibly because it is the approach that is most promoted to the general public. The parents in the study appeared to be unaware of the demands of

the OPOL approach and of the need for the provision of consistent language input in two languages. As seen previously, the parent participants often underestimated the quantity of language input that their children were getting. Marc, for example, realised during the interview that his children were not getting as much input in French as in English because he was not reading enough to his children in French. At the same time, my participants seemed to make a lot of efforts to provide additional input by trying to include their children in their professional lives. The parent participants were also very involved in the formal education of their children.

My findings show that the OPOL method was indeed hard to implement. This method also may have created issues of power in the families because one parent, usually the mother, spent more time with the children and might have felt more responsible for developing familial bilingualism.

#### **9.4.3. Findings on the emotional impact of bilingualism**

The emotional aspects that I present in this section arose from what the participants said about their experiences of familial bilingualism and aim to answer the third question of the study which was “what emotional impact does raising bilingual children or being raised bilingually has on members of bilingual families?” The participants talked about their own integration in their new environments as well as their children’s integration. Most of the participants seemed to find it difficult to articulate their cultural identities. The parent participants also talked about their feelings of responsibility as parents of bilingual children.

##### **9.4.3.1. Bilingualism as a transformative skill**

The data clearly showed that active bilingualism had contributed to making the participants feel positively different at an individual level. Isabelle and Mark who originally came from bilingual families talked about the psychological benefits they had drawn from being good at languages since youth. Linda who acquired French as an adult also seemed very proud of her achievement in learning and using French. However, passive bilingualism, as in the case of Cristina in Galician, did not seem to be experienced so positively. Additionally, some of the participants in the study talked about the social recognition and attention they got from being bilingual. Marc, for example, seemed to enjoy the appreciative reaction of people when he switched languages in front of them. Equally, the participants of the second generation, Sophie and Manu, reported being happy to have acquired a valuable language skill that made them stand out from their peers. They

compared themselves to their peers and acknowledged that members of their communities envied the language skills they had. Being bilingual was thus seen as a rewarding experience.

Secondly, for some participants, it seems that embracing bilingualism might have answered a complex need to construct new selves and acquire other personalities. Julie talked about feeling different when she spoke Spanish and liking herself better in that language. This finding would tend to support Kramsch's SLA perspectives (2006) on the power of second language acquisition to transform individuals. For the author, bilinguals feel a real "desire" to identify with others, with their language and their ways of speaking (Kramsch, 2006, p. 101).

This desire to identify with others also seemed to have motivated Ramiro, Julie's Venezuelan husband, to use English, his second language, at home. Ramiro was reported as valuing English so much that he would not speak Spanish, his first language and the dominant language of Venezuela, to his wife and children. The other fathers in the studies seemed more flexible. They acquired the heritage languages of their wives to feel more included in the family interactions. However, the language used in the family had the potential to create issues of power (Norton Pierce, 1995). In Isabelle and Cristina's families, for example, the adoption of the heritage languages might have conferred more power on the mothers because they were more able to communicate in the heritage languages. Isabelle and Cristina's husbands learned the heritage languages alongside their children and were less competent than their spouses. I would suggest that the preference for the use of one language at home might also have signalled to the children that this language was more valuable since both parents chose to use it. This was particularly true in Julie's family although paradoxically it was Ramiro who seemed to have insisted on adopting English as the language of the family.

The new identities that the participants constructed through languages seemed at times problematic and there was some tension between the wish of the participants to retain their cultural differences and the need to integrate into their new communities. In their narratives, Julie and Linda gave a lot of examples of how they struggled to feel integrated into their new communities. I would argue that in both cases this might have been because both became teachers of English and thus had to retain their English selves to promote the languages both inside and outside their home. In addition, the parent participants could be reminded of their cultural differences when they used the dominant language because they had foreign accents or made mistakes. Julie talked about experiencing fossilisation (Han, 2004) and attrition (Chin and Wigglesworth, 2007). I would suggest that for Julie

fossilisation must have been very frustrating because it was not conditioned by her efforts to learn a second language. Julie and Isabelle also seemed stressed about maintaining their first languages and talked about attrition which is a loss of language often attributed to lack of practice (Chin and Wigglesworth, 2007). In addition, this might have made them aware of their cultural isolation.

Cristina who seemed to prioritize the retention of her Spanish cultural identity for her son's sake expressed doubts about her new migrant identity saying that she did not feel she fitted in neither in Britain nor in Spain. For the parents' generation, this finding seems to contradict the concept of fluidly developed by Dervin (2012, 2013) according to which bilingual individuals should be free to choose between their different identities and thus treat identities as personal projects (Holliday, 2010). In the study, the parents did not seem free to choose their identities because their cultural identities were so tied to their parenting identities. They talked about their identities as parents of bilingual children and this might have conditioned what they then said about their cultural identities. However, had my study not focused on parenting, the participants might have spoken differently about their cultural identities.

The participants of the second generation, Sophie and Manu, who were brought up bilingually, seemed happy about their active bilingualism and their bilingual identities. Sophie and Manu, who had more opportunities to travel or live abroad than their monolingual peers, reported being envied for their language skills. However, at times both Sophie and Manu also seemed in quest of a single cultural identity. Manu seemed to have chosen to identify as Mexican while at times Sophie seemed to regret feeling neither totally French nor totally British when she changed countries.

Sophie also talked about her experiences of not wanting to be different from her peers when she was growing up. While Sophie liked being noticed when she spoke French in public with her mother, she did not like to be treated differently in school. In this respect, it could also be said that some parents seemed to have been a little bit too demonstrative of their cultural difference when their children were growing up. Laurie reported being embarrassed by her father's difference because he used to wear a French beret in public. Julie talked about being the "hippies" on top of the mountain and Linda talked about being the English eccentric of her French village. Additionally, the personality of the members of the families might also have played a part in how the children adjust to belonging to a bilingual family (Piller, 2001). Amy, for example, was reported as not liking hearing her mother chatting in English in France. Among the parent participants, while Alain or Marc seemed very happy to present their foreign personas to the public, Cristina seemed rather

worried about performing the role of a bilingual mother. These findings support the idea of bilinguals as “social actors” (Li Wei and Moyer, 2008, p. 13) who perform their identities through discourse in one or more languages (Tabouret-Keller, 1997). And in my study some participants seemed to enjoy the performance more than others.

Some of the parents’ emotional responses seemed directly linked to notions of cultural identity. In the study, the parents who migrated to a new country reported that their cultural identities had changed as they integrated elements of both cultures in their identities. However, the social and cultural identities of the participants were not as flexible as it appeared. Most participants seemed to want to hang on to their cultural identity of birth. This could suggest that the parent participants were insecure about claiming another cultural identity through language. The examples of the parents who had experienced childhood bilingualism are interesting because they show that children who are raised in bilingual families may not necessarily grow up to be more flexible about the cultural identity they wish to transmit to their children.

#### **9.4.3.2. Difficulties to retain and transmit cultural identities**

There seemed to be some tension between the wish of the participants to embrace new cultural identities and the need to retain their national and cultural identities. This seemed to be the case of Isabelle and Marc who, although they were very vocal about their positive experiences of bilingualism and biculturalism, seemed very much attached to their French identity and language. Retaining their French identity seemed strongly linked to parenting their children in French. While Isabelle discussed how her long stay outside of France had changed her and how it had affected how she functioned emotionally, she also talked about her strong determination to retain her French identity and language to continue to transmit them to her children. Isabelle did not want to compromise about the language and culture she was transmitting to her children. Marc who described himself as Spanish (and Catalan) was also concentrating on transmitting his French cultural identity. On the other hand, Cristina talked directly about her experience of parenting a bilingual child and about the fact that she would have a different parenting experience than her Spanish peers and thus be different from the other Spanish mothers she knew. Linda also talked about the shock she experienced when she realised that her daughter would grow up to be different. Living bilingually in a foreign country meant that the parent participants thought of their identities and those of their children regularly which might have been emotionally taxing.

Most of the mother participants insisted that they emotionally needed their children to speak their first languages. They explained that it was because it was their first



languages. Marc, however, seemed to have chosen French over Spanish or Catalan which were the languages his parents spoke at home. This raises the issue of what the parents wanted to transmit to their children through the heritage languages and whether they wanted to transmit the cultural identities that they had forged as children. It also raises the issue of whether it matters if you do not speak the first language of your parents. Through their children, the participants seemed to want to establish continuity between their past and their future. Their first languages were associated with their history and the identities they had started forming in childhood. Incidentally, these first languages might also have affected their views on life. In turn, the heritage languages might come to affect the children's views as well as their plans for the future including migrating or transmitting the heritage languages to the next generation. Sophie talked about transmitting French, her mother's language, because it was the emotional language she shared with her mother. However, the data also shows that using a second language did not seem to affect the emotional bonds that parents had with their children. For example, Isabelle and Cristina's husbands used their second languages with their children to feel more included. However, parents seemed affected when it was the children who chose to change languages.

The parents in the study did not seem to have a problem using a second language in their intimate relationships with their spouses. Julie showed that sometimes a change of language might even help mend a marital relationship. The data showed that parents relied on their spouses to facilitate the development of their children's bilingualism. The parents had to agree on a common strategy that satisfied both the needs of the family and their own need to communicate with their children in their first languages. However, an unwanted shift towards the dominant language at home could affect the parents' relationship. Such a shift was experienced negatively by Isabelle who seemed to blame her husband for encouraging the family to speak in English. At home, Isabelle struggled to cope with shifts of languages. She reported feeling rejected when English was used and at times seemed to blame her husband for encouraging the family to speak in English. Isabelle also reported feeling tired when the rest of her family used English, the dominant language. Thus, in some cases, the choice of the dominant language at home might affect the parents' relationships. In the study, family breakups and changes of countries also led to language shifts that could be experienced negatively by different members of the families. When she came back to England, Linda, for example, lost her opportunity to use French and failed to convince her daughter to use French with her while Julie's children felt upset when their mother rediscovered English. Therefore, my data suggest that a failure to stick to a tacitly agreed familial strategy might result in negative feelings, and possibly feelings of isolation.

### **9.4.3.3. Feelings of responsibility**

In the study, it seemed that the task of helping the children become bilingual rested heavily on the mothers. This aligns with recent research on bilingual families and with King and Fogle's (2006a) remarks that "while in many communities fathers play an increasingly visible and active role in parenting, the brunt of the work of parenting (Thompson, 1991) and the bulk of the expectations still fall disproportionately on mothers' shoulders (Bunnell & Beutler, 1999) (Ibid., pp. 697-698).

The mothers in my study spent more time with the children than the fathers especially when the children were very young. Consequently, the mothers seemed to have felt a lot of pressure about parenting and experienced many complex emotions. These emotions often seemed linked to feelings of responsibility. Consequently, my findings align with King and Fogle's (2006a) findings that transmitting a heritage language is "invisible" work that may entail maternal guilt, stress and personal trauma (p. 697).

Paradoxically, although society value elitist languages, the mothers in the study did not mention been supported by their communities or childhood professionals. Therefore, they had to be creative in their efforts and determination to protect what they believed was their children's best interests. This might explain their involvement in the schooling of their children. Isabelle put a lot of effort home-schooling her youngest daughter in French. At times, the mother's involvement in the children's lives seemed to go beyond what is generally expected from monolingual parents. It could be argued that Julie and Linda's involvement in their daughter's formal education might have contributed to the problems of adaptation of both children in nursery school because of a lack of knowledge about how to help children adjust to bilingualism. It seems to me that the parents needed more support in terms of information and guidance from the school.

Using the heritage language could also be problematic for the children as it brought an extra filial responsibility. In the study, Sophie reported that she had to accommodate the language needs of her mother because she was made very aware that her mother considered French as her emotional language. Consequently, Sophie even wanted the third generation of her family to continue to speak French to her mother, although there would be no communicative need for the language. In most of the families in the study, familial bilingualism seemed to have been imposed on the children. The parents who had made choices when they were children, Isabelle and Marc, seemed to deny choice to their children even when the children seemed to rebel against their parents' choices. Mike commented that his children rebelled at home by using the dominant language with their mother.

However, in the data, the children's own needs, be it emotional or other, seemed to differ from the parents'. These needs changed throughout the lives of the children. When they were young, the children in the study like Sophie or Laurie did not want to be different from their peers. They seemed to need to conform socially. However, as adults, the participants of the second generation seemed very pragmatic about their experiences of familial bilingualism and did not talk much about their own emotional needs. Nevertheless, they seemed to understand the emotional needs of their parents. Sophie confirmed that her mother had talked to her about her emotional need to hear French. It is thus questionable whether Sophie had a choice of language when communicating with her mother as Sophie knew that not speaking French would affect her mother emotionally.

Paradoxically, the views that the children in the study had on language transmission still resembled their parents'. It seems that they wished to transmit the heritage languages to their own children to enable the latter to speak those languages with their grandparents. They also seemed to want to give their children the same advantages they received from their parents. Linda reported that her daughter would like her child to speak three languages. However, the second generation of bilingual children in the study was very realistic about raising their children bilingually and seemed aware that it might be difficult to transmit languages that were not their dominant languages. This shows the vulnerability of intergenerational bilingualism based on the perceived need to feel perfectly competent in using languages.

Lastly, I would argue that children should have their say about whether they want to speak the first languages of their parents. As this would ease the sense of responsibility that parents, especially mothers might feel if their children do not become bilingual. Children change their minds and older children can be motivated to learn heritage languages at a later stage in their lives.

### **9.5. Shortcomings of the study**

Initially, I read too widely and drew on too many theories from disciplines such as psychology, sociology or applied linguistics. My readings were useful for a general background. However, from the initial data, I should have refined my questions and perhaps even then, have begun to reconsider any questions about emotions as too ambitious although the subject of parenting bilingual children is highly emotional. Instead, I should have focused on language ideologies and family language policies. Perhaps personal interests at the beginning prevailed.

With more clearly defined questions, the methodology might have been more directed to a qualitative, sociolinguistic approach possibly using narrative analysis. However, the doctoral study was set within a university context in which certain methodologies in applied linguistics predominate.

In addition, the study might have been constrained by my choice to interview local French and Spanish speakers. The study would perhaps have been strengthened if I had chosen to talk to bilingual speakers of other languages, giving greater diversity in the participant responses.

## **9.6. Directions for future research**

In this study, the language ideologies of the participants were very complex. On one hand, it seemed that the participants were aware that they were equipping their children with an important symbolic capital, in the form of global languages, that would consolidate their children's social positions and enable them to live anywhere in the world, but on the other hand, they seemed very much attached to the use of the heritage language which was experienced as emotional and was often linked to the parents' cultural identity. The examples of the parents who had experienced childhood bilingualism were very interesting because they showed that children who were raised in bilingual families might not necessarily grow up to be more flexible about the cultural identity they wished to transmit to their children. Equally, the desire of the third generation to transmit the heritage language was interesting because it seems to contradict Fishman's (1991) controversial three generation traditional theory (1991) according to which by the third generation, the families become monolingual. This seems to align with new research investigating the desire to maintain the heritage language to accommodate significant others such as grand-parents for example (Spolky, 2012).

In my study, the thread linking society, bilingualism and power which could be investigated further. This could also include the emerging topic of social class in applied linguistics. In a recent special journal on social class, Vandrick (2014) argues that class strongly affects 'the lived experiences of participants in second-language education' (p. 89) and I would thus recommend its investigation.

Lastly, my study also touched on notions of 'good parenting' and the fact that parents wanted to be seen as good parents in their efforts to promote familial bilingualism. The emotions linked to being a good parent could be further explored. This would build on King and Fogle (2006a) who critically examine how parents define "success" in family language

policy implementation, how this definition changes over time, and what is at stake for children, parents and communities.

### **9.7. Implications of this study and final comments**

This study was an exploration of familial bilingualism and I make no claims to generalisation as my data analysis is subjective by virtue of the methodology I used. Nevertheless, I hope that by documenting lived experiences of familial bilingualism and examining the fields of language ideologies, language acquisition, language family policies and emotions, my study shows the complexity of familial bilingualism and the need to conduct cross-disciplinary studies of the topic (Li Wei, 2008).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect to be uncovered by the research is the link between familial bilingualism and parenting. The participants in the study did not think they had a real choice about transmitting the heritage language because the languages they spoke were elitist languages, highly valued by society at large. With the rise of globalisation, equipping children with an elite language is increasingly considered as good parenting and it therefore becomes the responsibility of the parents of heritage languages to successfully transmit their languages and cultures. Therefore, if transmitting elite languages has become the transmission of a Bourdieusian social capital, the parents have little choice but to transmit their heritage languages and cultures and might even feel pressurised into doing so because they want to be good parents.

Families also generally expect a family's members to be able to communicate with each other. Therefore, the parents of heritage languages also have the added responsibility to equip their children with a language that enables them to communicate with their extended families abroad. Therefore, the stakes are very high for the parents because they do not live in isolation. In addition, in bilingual families, mothers are often faced with the tasks of planning and managing familial bilingualism and seem to receive little support from the outside communities and at times from their partners as seen in the study.

Parents of bilingual children have to manage the emotional aspects of developing familial bilingualism. My data support De Houwer's (2009b) findings that raising children bilingually is very complex emotionally and that more should be done to inform parents about the emotional impact of familial bilingualism. In the thesis, I identified some emotional aspects that seem worthy of further investigation such as the feelings of responsibility, insecurity, and isolation experienced by my parent participants. It is tempting to study emotions through a psychological lens or follow in the footsteps of applied linguists like Pavlenko (2008a) and Kramsch (2009a) who show the need to

integrate emotion into research on bilingualism. However, the study of emotions and familial bilingualism may warrant further studies using a sociological lens. The emotions experienced by my participants were very complex because they not only seemed to be uniquely linked to the bonds they had to their first languages and cultures. They were also linked to the bonds that tied the participants to other family members and to the communities in which they lived. This strong link to social relationships feeds into research on emotion and relationships that show the complexity of emotions and the way emotions are felt through social interactions (Burkitt, 2014). Further research to explore emotions within bilingual social interactions should be developed.

We now live in a globalised world in which language skills are becoming very valuable. A greater understanding of bilingualism within families, and information more widely disseminated within families and communities, could enable more informed language education policies. However, at the family level, I would advocate a flexible approach. Members of bilingual families (parents as well as children) should be able to choose what is best for them. In the study, most parents had no issue with their children having multiple identities, including national identities, although some participants also attributed a single national identity to their children which was not necessarily the national identity of the country they were growing up in. The examples of the parents who had experienced childhood bilingualism were interesting because they showed that children who are raised in bilingual families may not necessarily grow up to be more flexible about the cultural identity they wish to transmit to their children. As I have seen with my own children, who are now young adults, and have come to view their languages heritage as an asset, future research could focus more specifically on the second and third generations of bilingual families and examine whether subsequent generations, who acquired other languages and perceive themselves as having multiple identities through bilingualism, are more flexible in their approaches to and understanding about the transmission of heritage languages and cultures.

(86 926 words)

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Ethical and consent forms**

## CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: An exploration of the relationships between parents and children in bilingual family settings with respect to the linguistic, social and emotional aspects of children's developing bilingualism.

Name of Researcher: Annie Deakin

Contact details:

Address: 

Department of English and language studies Canterbury Christ Church University North Holmes Campus Canterbury Kent CT1 1QU
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Tel: 

01227 767700 Ext. 2617
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Email: 

annie.deakin@canterbury.ac.uk
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initial box

Please

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential
4. I agree to take part in the above study.


\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person taking consent  
(if different from researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Copies: 1 for participant  
1 for researcher

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Annie Deakin as part of a PhD on multilingualism.

An exploration of the relationships between parents and children in bilingual family settings with respect to the linguistic, social and emotional aspects of children's developing bilingualism.

### What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will take part in one or more interviews of about 45 minutes in duration. It is expected that you are willing and able to take part in the interview(s). The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis, but you are free to ask for the recording to be stopped at any time. Pseudonyms will be inserted at the point of transcription so that the data will be anonymised before analysis.

### To participate in this research you must:

- Be a member of the national group being studied (one of the parents will be French or Spanish)
- Be willing to take part in one or more interviews
- Give your consent for the session to be audio-recorded and transcribed using pseudonyms.

### Feedback

If you request it, the researcher will send you a brief summary of the results of the whole study after analysis has been completed. Please understand that this may take a number of months.

### Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by the researcher and her supervisors. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

### Dissemination of results

It is intended for the results of this study to be disseminated through suitable academic outlets, including journals, edited books and/or conferences on the topic of multilingualism

### Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

### Any questions?

Please contact Annie Deakin. You can send me an email to [annie.deakin@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:annie.deakin@canterbury.ac.uk) or phone me 01227 767700 Ext. 2617

## **Appendix 2**

### **Originals of the quotes used in the text**

**P 63 Bourdieu**

Souvent mon expérience personnelle me rend sensible à des choses que d'autres ne verraient pas... Le problème, c'est de travailler sa propre expérience pour en faire quelque chose. (Bourdieu, 2009)

**Page 89 - (Isabelle, 2011, l. 357-364)**

Ma mère m'a eu très jeune. Elle avait 22 ans quand je suis née. Mes parents, c'est des soixante-huitards. Tu vois, c'est des gens qui sont nés juste après la guerre et qui étaient un petit peu baba cool, socialistes tout ce que tu veux, très ouverts tandis que mes copines, celles qui avaient le même âge que moi, tous leurs parents étaient beaucoup plus âgés et c'était des gens plus conservateurs, plus vieille France, plus stricts. À la maison aussi, moi j'étais très libre toujours. Mais en même temps, libre ça voulait dire aussi qu'on s'occupait moins de moi si tu veux. J'étais moins, comment on dit, moins surveillée quoi.

**Page 90 – (Isabelle, 2011, l 20-30)**

À ce moment-là, je ne faisais pas encore d'allemand. Ma grand-mère est allemande et maman, elle a essayé de parler allemand pendant longtemps. Mais là, j'avais un rejet, c'était un peu trop à la fois... J'ai étudié l'allemand après. Mais je pense qu'à ce moment-là, je n'en avais pas besoin. Ça ne faisait pas partie de ma vie. J'allais à l'école en iranien. J'avais des amis à qui on parlait qu'anglais parce qu'ils n'allaient pas à la même école que moi. Il avait le français. Et puis, je crois que j'avais un petit peu parlé allemand avant de partir en Iran mais pas énormément.

**Page 91 – (Isabelle, 2011, l 40-47)**

Je suis souvent venue en Angleterre... parce que quand je suis venue d'Iran, j'ai fait de l'anglais à l'école. Et, j'étais tout de suite la meilleure à l'école en anglais. Et, j'aimais pas trop l'école. J'adorais la classe d'anglais et j'adorais être la meilleure. Et, je suis venue souvent en vacances par choix. J'ai fait des échanges par l'intermédiaire d'une amie de ma mère, qui était prof, qui avait sa famille en Angleterre. Elle venait en France, j'allais chez eux. C'était un petit peu la même chose après avec les autres langues parce que j'ai pris allemand en deuxième langue, italien en troisième langue. À partir du moment où j'ai appris une langue, il a vraiment fallu que j'aille dans les pays, pour la parler.

**Page 92 – (Isabelle, 2011, l 55-59)**

Il était moins braqué sur les langues que moi je pense. Il était moins linguiste, quoi. Il était matheux. Il avait l'esprit plus scientifique aussi. C'était un choix parce que, en fait, dans ma vie, je n'aurai pas eu besoin énormément de parler les langues autant que je le faisais. Je les ai choisies à l'école. En Iran, à l'école iranienne, moi j'allais dans les classes farsi



parce que j'avais atteint un bon niveau. Mon frère, il en faisait moins parce que lui, il préférait rester dans les classes en français donc c'était quand même un choix.

**Page 92 – (Marc, 2014, I 80-88)**

Il faut que je commence au début. Mes parents sont venus en vacances pour voir ma tante, et en fait, je sais pas si c'était vraiment des vacances, c'était peut-être une expérience qu'ils voulaient faire d'aller en France voir ma tante parce qu'elle leur a peut-être dit qu'en France, c'était mieux, je sais pas. Et en fait, mes parents, ils étaient là et puis heu, comme mon père était maçon, une amie de ma tante leur a demandé de faire des travaux chez elle.

**Page 93 – (Marc, 2014, I 26-29)**

Pour moi, c'était normal d'entendre mon père parler catalan et ma mère parler espagnol, et puis des fois en français eh, eh, entre. Nous on n'aimait pas, je me rappelle, parler espagnol ou catalan. On répondait, nos parents nous parlaient dans leurs langues en fait et nous on répondait en français. Alors voilà, ça se passait comme ça. (Marc, 2014, I 26-29)

**(Marc, 2014, I 47-53)**

Voilà, c'était en général un mois de vacances. Tous les ans, on faisait ça pratiquement. Et c'était assez intéressant, quoi. Mais c'est vrai que le catalan de la Escala, par exemple, dans le nord de la Catalogne, c'était pas du tout le même que le catalan que mon père parlait parce qu'il avait d'habitude de parler le catalan d'Emposta. C'est un peu un dialecte en fait. Et moi, ma tante quand elle nous parlait en catalan, c'était encore un peu plus dur. C'était plus difficile à comprendre mais on comprenait. On comprenait hein le Catalan et l'Espagnol. On comprenait bien tout petits et c'était assez intéressant quoi.

**Page 94 – (Marc, 2014, I 141-148).**

Mais, c'est vrai que quand je suis venu en Angleterre, je suis allé à l'université et j'ai fait de l'italien. J'ai fait du portugais. J'ai fait du, à temps partiel en fait, j'ai fait du portugais. J'ai fait de l'italien. J'ai fait du grec. Mais ça c'était à cause du travail que j'avais parce que quand je suis arrivé ici en Angleterre, j'ai travaillé dans des « fish and chips » avec des Grecs et puis je me suis intéressé un peu au grec. J'ai acheté des bouquins et j'ai travaillé tout seul. Et j'ai, mais bon j'ai pas continué. Mais c'est vrai, c'est dommage parce que si j'avais fait ça, depuis l'âge de 15 ans, je m'étais mis à faire des langues, j'en parlerai une dizaine.

**Marc (2014, I 131-135)**

Je voulais faire des langues petit parce que j'étais bon en langues. J'étais bon, à l'école, en anglais, machin, en espagnol. C'est parce que j'étais bon. J'étais toujours le meilleur de la

classe parce que c'était facile, sans travailler, bien sûr. On avait pas besoin de travailler. Ça me rappelle mon fils à l'école. Il travaille pas, mais il est bon parce que c'est sa langue, normal.

**Page 94-95 – (Marc, 2014, I 281-285)**

On a de la chance. Incroyable. Tous les gens, ils pensent que je suis intelligent. Non, je suis pas intelligent. Je parle anglais et français. Et puis après, il y a un copain espagnol qui passe et je vais parler espagnol, et les gens me regardent comme ça. « Vous êtes intelligent », non, je suis pas intelligent. Je parle parce que je suis né avec.

**Page 95 – (Marc, 2014, I 137-139)**

Et puis, les langues, c'est facile pour nous parce que depuis tout petit il y avait des cases dans le cerveau, qu'il y a une langue ici, une langue là et on passe d'une à l'autre sans problème, sans mélanger.

**Page 97 – (Alain, 2013, I 81-85)**

Moi, je travaillais dans un restaurant italien et j'ai mis 6 mois pour apprendre l'anglais, sur le tas hé, pas à l'écriture. Si j'écrivais, même maintenant je l'écris à ma façon (ah, ah, ah). J'ai jamais fait, j'ai jamais pris de cours pour. Il faut pas me demander d'écrire un livre (ah, ah, ah)

**Page 105 – (Isabelle, 2011, I 87-90)**

J'ai toujours dit que pour moi, c'était important de parler ma langue. Que c'était ma langue émotionnelle. Que c'était comme ça que j'exprimais ce que je sentais et que je ne pourrais pas parler autre chose à mes enfants et c'était pareil pour lui (mari). Donc, ça s'est passé naturellement. (Isabelle, 2011, I 87-90)

**Page 107 – (Isabelle, 2011, I 387-393)**

J'avais pas le choix. Si les enfants ne me parlaient pas français, des fois je leur disais que j'étais triste quand je n'entendais jamais du français. Le côté émotionnel de la langue, je leur en ai toujours parlé. Même que je me souviens une fois, une copine m'a critiquée pour ça. Elle me disait : « Tu sais, tu devrais faire attention parce que tes enfants, quand ils ont un message, c'est le message qui est important. C'est pas dans quelle langue ils le disent. Si tu dis des choses émotionnelles, c'est comme un chantage».

**(Sophie, 2012, I 200-202)**

Pour nous si on parle pas en français, un jour on va le regretter et puis je sais pas, ouais, je pense que c'est important qu'on comprenne cette raison.

**Page 107-108 – (Isabelle, 2011, p 418-428)**

Mais pour moi, si j'ai des émotions, c'est important que je les explique à mes enfants parce que si je ne les explique pas ils vont de toute façon les sentir. Ils vont se les expliquer eux-mêmes, et peut être que ce sera faux leur explication. Peut-être qu'ils vont se sentir coupables et ne pas savoir comment ils peuvent changer ça. Alors que finalement c'était juste une histoire de langue, une histoire de partager quelque chose avec moi. Et je crois que pour eux, c'est devenu un truc émotionnel. Et maintenant, des fois, ils ont besoin d'entendre la langue, besoin de parler avec moi, d'avoir un petit moment avec moi tout seul ou on peut parler français. Je pense que, de toute façon, on passe toujours des trucs émotionnels à ses enfants mais il vaut mieux être honnête avec ça.

**(Sophie, 2012, I 202-204)**

Et puis, je comprends parce qu'elle est française aussi et si elle entend tout le temps l'anglais, que ses enfants parlent tout le temps en anglais avec elle, c'est moins, je sais pas, c'est moins personnel peut-être. Au moins on partage sa culture.

**Page 108 – (Sophie, 2012, I 69-72)**

Ça dépend, je crois que, émotionnellement, peut-être en français parce que je partage plus de choses avec ma mère, parce que c'est ma maman et si je veux lui parler de garçons ou un truc comme ça vu qu'on se parle en français, je pense que des émotions comme ça ce serait en français mais je raconte des blagues en anglais avec mon père.

**Page 110 – Alain (2013, I 239-244)**

Non, il parle pas un mot non [il ne veut pas apprendre ?] Non. [Pas particulièrement] C'est un Anglais (ah, ah, ah, ah). Je pense qu'un jour quand ils vont réaliser que c'est utile. Mais c'est dommage parce que je vois tellement de familles, j'ai vu les enfants naître et je les vois maintenant, ils parlent couramment les deux langues. Il y en a une, qui habite derrière, qui parle deux langues couramment, l'allemand, l'anglais et le français. C'est magnifique...

**Page 110-111 – Sophie (2012, I 179-190)**

J'aimerais que mes enfants parlent français parce que ça serait bien qu'ils pourraient parler avec leur grand-mère en français. Mais je sais, parce que moi dans ma vie en ce moment je parle plus anglais, je vois que si je leur parle en anglais des fois, ça marcherait pas. La seule façon que ça a marché avec nous, c'est que ma mère elle a toujours insisté qu'elle nous

parle en français et c'était facile pour elle parce qu'elle était vraiment française. Elle est pas anglaise. Elle parlait moins bien anglais quand on était jeune. Alors je crois que il faudrait que je fasse très attention de vraiment que leur parler en français. Alors, ce serait quelque chose qu'il faudrait vraiment décider à ce moment-là. Et ça dépend avec qui je me marie aussi. Si je me marie avec quelqu'un de français, alors parfait, je peux leur parler en anglais et en français.

**Page 111 – (Sophie, 2012, I 103-109)**

Maintenant, son français il est très bien, mais parce qu'elle habite à Londres maintenant, elle a un travail, elle utilise moins son français. Et quand elle revient, elle veut parler français avec ma mère et avec moi parce qu'elle parle moins en français. Elle essaye d'apprendre à son copain de parler français aussi (ah, ah) parce que je crois qu'elle aussi elle voit que c'est important que si elle a des enfants un jour qu'eux aussi ils parlent français. Et vu qu'elle est bilingue, c'est difficile pour elle que de leur parler en français comme elle a fait ma mère parce qu'elle a les deux langues.

**Page 114 – (Isabelle, 2011, I 84-87)**

J'ai toujours dit que pour moi, c'était important de parler ma langue, que c'était ma langue émotionnelle, que c'était comme ça que j'exprimais ce que je sentais et que je ne pourrais pas parler autre chose à mes enfants. Et c'était pareil pour lui. Donc, ça s'est passé naturellement.

**(Isabelle, 2011, I 79-81)**

Lui, il a appris le français quand on a eu les enfants parce que c'était moi qui m'occupais des enfants. Moi, je leur parlais que français et puis il voulait pas être exclu. Donc, il a appris le français.

**Page 116 - (Marc, 2014, I 225-233)**

La décision qu'on a prise quand on a eu un enfant, on s'est dit, bon, on va lui parler en quoi ? Est-ce qu'on lui parle français et anglais, les deux, on mélange tout, qu'est-ce qu'on fait ? Comment on fait ? Ma femme est moitié française, moitié anglaise. Elle parle très bien le français. Elle parle très bien français ma femme malgré qu'elle fait des fautes aussi, assez rigolotes. Mais tout le monde pense qu'elle est française. D'abord, elle a le look, le français, elle parle français, elle s'habille comme une française. Elle a habité en France quand elle était jeune pendant toute sa jeunesse avec sa grand-mère. Donc, on se parle français.

**Page 118 – (Alain, 2013, I 129-134)**

Oui, mais dans la restauration, on y est jamais, hein. Moi, la gamine je la voyais que, je l'emmenais le matin à l'école. Tous les matins, c'était mon truc. Je l'emmenais à l'école et j'allais la rechercher l'après-midi. Mais à partir de 6 heures, moi j'étais au boulot, je la voyais jamais le soir. Alors, on a eu pas mal d'au pairs français et oui et quand elle avait 3 ans, 3-4 ans je lui apprenais des mots quand même, le nez, les yeux, la bouche. Tout ça, elle savait tout ça.

**(Marc, 2014, I 237-246)**

Et donc les enfants, on leur parle français à la maison ou maintenant si Hadrien, il descend. Je lui parle français, je ne lui parle pas anglais, je lui parle français. Il a pas autant de vocabulaire en français qu'il en a anglais parce que les histoires, on lui fait souvent, c'est souvent ma femme qui fait les histoires en anglais, moi, je lui fais de temps en temps les histoires en français, mais c'est rare en fait. Donc, il faudrait que j'en fasse un peu plus.

**Page 118-119 - (Alain, 2013, I 293-303)**

Quand j'ai ouvert le restaurant, c'était un restaurant français. Alors, j'employais des Français et je parlais tout en français... Ici, ça fait dix-huit ans ... On a toujours eu des Français, ici. Oui, il y a pleins de Français qui s'arrêtent. Pas mal de mes clients parlent français et j'emploie toujours des Français.

**Page 119 – (Alain, 2013, p 198-201)**

- Et, votre fille, elle continue à vous parler en français ?
- Ici, parce qu'elle travaille avec nous. [Ah, d'accord]. Alors, elle a beaucoup l'occasion de parler français mais ça ne lui vient pas naturellement. Alors, elle le fait mais c'est pas...

**Page 120 – (Isabelle, 2011, I 119-123)**

Mais quand les enfants étaient petits, ils me disaient quelque chose en anglais que je savais qu'ils savaient dire en français, je leur disais « Pardon ? » Et ça leur faisait répéter ou alors si je voyais qu'il y arrivait pas, c'était moi qui répétais ce qu'il venait de dire en français. Mais c'était une stratégie que j'avais employé naturellement parce que ça me semblait la façon...

**Page 121 - (Marc, 2014, I 264-268)**

Ils se parlent en anglais. Mais il faut les forcer à parler français. Alors, il faut les arrêter. « Non, en français, en français, en français ». Et des fois ça se passe, ils parlent en français un petit peu et tout à coup, paf, ça repart en anglais. S'il y a un mot qu'ils trouvent pas, s'ils trouvent pas un mot en français donc ils vont le trouver en anglais.

**Page 121 - (Marc, 2014, I 240-244)**

Mais c'est vrai comme lui, ils ont l'habitude de parler anglais à l'école et ci et ça. Quand il veut me raconter un truc, il va me le dire en anglais. Et je lui dis « non, non, en français » et c'est un peu plus difficile pour qu'il me raconte la même histoire en français parce qu'il a pas autant de vocabulaire en français qu'il en a anglais...

**(Marc, 2014, I 255-257)**

Même Emma. Emma, elle parle beaucoup en anglais en ce moment pourtant c'est elle qui parlait toujours français. Maintenant, elle s'est arrêtée, elle parle beaucoup anglais depuis qu'elle a va à l'école.

**Page 123 – (Isabelle, 2011, I 97-106)**

C'est drôle parce que la première, quand elle a commencé l'école, elle avait un petit problème pour prononcer certains mots. Et puis, sa maitresse, l'institutrice, quand elle avait quatre ans et demie m'a dit : « il faut qu'elle voit un orthophoniste ». Donc, j'ai contacté une orthophoniste qui au téléphone m'a dit « ah oui, vous pouvez m'expliquer un petit peu la situation ? ». Je lui ai dit qu'elle était d'une famille bilingue et que son institutrice avait dit qu'elle avait besoin... et elle m'a dit d'accord, donc on va prendre rendez-vous mais il faudra que vous vous teniez à une langue pour le moment. Et puis moi, j'ai jamais appelé parce que, Andie et moi, on s'est regardé dans le blanc des yeux, qui c'est qui va pas parler sa langue ? c'est pas possible quoi (rires). J'ai jamais appelé.

**Page 124 – (Alain, 2013, I 48-54)**

Et en parlant avec les gens du métier, ils disaient « Si vraiment tu veux monter, il faut apprendre une autre langue », et moi je parlais que français, tout juste (ah, ah, ah)... et alors j'avais écrit dans plusieurs endroits à Londres et j'ai, dans un des restaurant que j'ai envoyé, c'est un autre qui m'a répondu (ah, ah).

**Page 125 – Marc, 2014, I 179-180 ; 188-195)**

Et puis après, j'ai trouvé un nouveau travail, en fait ce travail ici qui était pas mal et tout. Je me suis fait des amis et puis, voilà et on continue... Donc, encore, j'avais un nouveau travail où je gagnais plus d'argent. J'étais bien payé. J'avais une voiture de société, machin truc. J'avais 25 ans. Je me suis acheté une maison à 26 ans. Pareil, c'est un truc quand même que j'aurais jamais pu faire en France... C'était facile, on pouvait emprunter de l'argent très facilement... Et puis voilà et la vie continue quoi. Et puis, d'un travail, j'en ai eu un autre et puis j'ai voulu changer et puis voilà.

**(Sophie, 2012, I 37-42)**

Je pense (ah, ah) qu'ils sont jaloux que je peux parler français ! Et puis, en France, ils trouvent ça bien que j'ai un niveau d'anglais que j'ai un niveau d'anglais élevé parce qu'en France, je pense que les gens, ils parlent mieux l'anglais que les Anglais parlent français en Angleterre. Alors, ils savent quand même parler anglais alors c'est pas aussi impressionnant et c'est pas aussi différent. Mais quand même, ils sont impressionnés que, ils voient ça comme un truc qui va m'aider dans ma carrière, tu sais.

**Page 127 (Marc, 2014, I 399-403, I 476-483)**

On voulait donner une meilleure éducation à notre fils. On a cherché et on a trouvé et on a pris la meilleure école qui existe. Parce qu'on a dit, on peut se permettre de le faire pour l'instant, on espère pouvoir se le permettre mais il faut qu'on plonge et qu'on le fasse... Et là, le choix on l'a, donc on l'a pris, le choix. On peut se permettre de le mettre dans une superbe école... Mais c'est sûr que les gens, ils disent tous il va avoir beaucoup de connections avec le monde entier en fait parce que leurs amis viennent du monde entier... Et c'est ça cette école. Des connections, du travail...

**(Marc, 2014, I 385-400)**

C'est ma femme qui a voulu ça. Moi jamais je les aurais mis dans une école comme ça... on l'a mis dans une école réputée, publique et donc, réputée mais bon, il y a quand même des enfants de partout et qui habitent donc autour de l'école, donc vous voyez ce que je veux dire... et donc des enfants de tous les bords, quoi. Et il y en a qui sont un peu, ils sont sales, y en a qui parlent pas bien et je sais que c'est comme ça dans toutes les écoles et puis les profs, ils ont pas le temps de s'en occuper. Et ils sont toujours un peu pressés et ci et ça, et on voulait donner une meilleure éducation à notre fils.

**Page 128 - (Isabelle, 2011, I 173-177)**

Quand on a voyagé 18 mois, c'est moi qui leur ai fait l'école. La moitié, c'était Andie qui le faisait. Mais lui, il leur enseignait seulement les maths et les sciences. Et moi, je leur enseignais aussi les maths et les sciences en français et je leur enseignais le français donc ils ont fait pas mal de français pendant 18 mois.

**(Isabelle, 2011, I 188-194)**

Sophie est allée à l'école à mi-temps jusqu'à l'âge de 8 ou 9 ans. Elle allait qu'à mi-temps. Elle restait deux jours à la maison avec moi. J'ai eu l'autorisation de l'école pour faire ça. J'ai eu beaucoup de chance. Quand on est revenus. Ils ont vu que les enfants étaient en avance... Quand la maitresse faisait quelque chose d'important elle me le montrait et moi

je couvrais ça à la maison avec Sophie. Donc, elle a aussi bénéficié de ça car évidemment à trois ans, elle pouvait pas lire et écrire comme les autres.

**(Sophie, 2012, I 116; 122-126)**

Et en plus, je restais à la maison et j'écrivais toute la journée. C'était pas, moi je pensais que c'était pas marrant maintenant je trouve que c'était super... Ça m'énervait des fois quand j'étais très jeune.

**Page 129 - (Sophie, 2012, I 267-270)**

Mais en fait, ce qui se passait c'est qu'elle était la prof de français. C'était un français d'un niveau pas très élevé. Alors moi, elle me donnait du travail à faire dans le coin de la classe et j'aimais pas trop.

**(Sophie, 2012, I 112-116)**

Quand j'étais jeune, une fois par semaine, j'allais pas à l'école et ma mère elle m'enseignait le français à la maison, l'écriture, la grammaire, la conjugaison et tout ça et ça j'aimais moins des fois parce que ça voulait dire que je loupais l'école et après je pouvais pas participé à certains trucs et j'étais pas pareille que tout le monde.

**Page 129-130 - (Alain, 2013, I 115-121)**

Elle est née, un mois après, je l'avais inscrite au Lycée Français parce qu'il fallait longtemps, longtemps avant... Et dès que l'enfant est propre, on pouvait les mettre dans, ça s'appelait « Le Petit Jardin Français » à Notting gate. Ça, c'était une « nursery ». Ils ne parlaient que français.

**(Alain, 2013, I 152-162)**

Et ce qui se passait c'est que, je crois que c'est toujours comme ça maintenant, le lycée est, l'éducation au lycée, c'est très haut, hum, la moyenne, si vous n'avez pas 14/20, dehors et il faut payer hein. Moi je payais déjà quand elle avait 3 ans. À l'époque, je payais 500 livres par trimestre ou un truc comme ça, c'était pas mal d'argent déjà. Et on avait des clients, qui avaient leurs enfants qui avaient 12-13 ans et, qui disaient, « ben ouais la gamine, elle est chez la grand-mère en France » ou alors « elle est interne en France » parce qu'ils veulent continuer l'éducation française, Ohhhh, on s'est regardait avec ma femme et j'ai dit « Écoute, on a qu'une fille, et on veut la garder, on veut la voir le maximum. Déjà que je la vois pas beaucoup le soir, alors on l'a changée et on l'a mise dans le système anglais.

**Page 133 - (Isabelle, 2011, I 171-177)**

On a habité en France pendant un an. Ils sont allés à la maternelle. Ils ont vu d'autres élèves, d'autres enfants en France apprendre le français avec le livre qu'ils utilisaient au CP. C'était



le Ratus, ça s'appelait. On a vraiment bien exploré le Ratus. Ils adoraient la méthode, le b-a Ba, très très française. Ça a très très bien marché avec eux mais le Ratus alors qu'en France, ça prend un an d'habitude, ils l'ont vraiment bien assimilé, tu vois, cette première méthode. À côté de ça, ils ont commencé à lire beaucoup de livres

**Page 137 - (Isabelle, 2011, l 70-73)**

Quand on a vécu en France, on a vécu en France pendant un an, on parlait français à la maison. La langue, c'était le français. Mais toutes les autres années, les dix-neuf autres années, comme on était toujours dans des pays anglophones, on parlait anglais en fait, lui et moi, mais moi je parle français aux enfants.

**Page 140 - (Isabelle, 2011, l 464-471)**

Oui, parce que mon mari il n'a pas vraiment fait d'efforts pour ça. Souvent même quand je parle en français, il m'interrompt. Il continue en anglais. Des fois, j'ai l'impression qu'il le fait exprès. Je crois qu'il ne s'en rend pas compte mais c'est vrai que quand tu cherches ton tour dans la conversation, j'ai un peu l'impression de me battre pour arriver à ce que ; mais en même temps, de plus en plus aussi, j'oublie quelle langue je viens de parler. Donc je crois qu'avec le temps les choses se sont améliorées. Et puis, avec le temps, je me suis rendu compte que mes enfants sont français et que ça y est, ils sont grands, ils sont faits et j'ai plus besoin d'avoir peur maintenant.

**Page 142 - (Isabelle, 2011, l 200-204)**

On vit tout le temps en anglais. Ç'aurait été un petit peu mieux équilibré si on avait vécu en France plus longtemps en tout cas parce que moi j'aurai facilement accepté de parler anglais à la maison je crois si j'avais senti un équilibre. Mais, j'ai toujours tellement eu peur que mes enfants ne, que je n'arrive pas à leur passer cette partie de mon identité. C'était un petit peu, comment on dit, une compensation quoi.

**Page 143 - (Isabelle, 2011, l 230-237)**

Des fois, je lui dis : « il faut que tu m'aides ». J'aimerais bien qu'il essaye un petit peu. Ils me parlent beaucoup en anglais des fois dans les conversations françaises. Tu rentres dans la pièce, ça change à cause de ta présence. Je lui dis « si tu dis un mot français, ça transforme » (ha, ha) tu sais, ça vient pas naturellement donc il peut pas. Ils ont toujours fait ça. Ils peuvent commencer une phrase parce qu'ils me regardent en français et puis, ils regardent leur père et ça continue en anglais. Depuis tout petits. Le problème c'est qu'il y a trop de raisons de parler anglais et pas assez de parler français. Tu vois, ça me donne une grande responsabilité.

**(Isabelle, 2011, I 204-214)**

Puis des fois, maintenant qu'ils sont plus grands et qu'ils ont beaucoup plus de vie à l'extérieur et qu'ils reviennent à la maison, des fois je me sens un petit peu exclue dans la famille le soir quand ils parlent tous entre eux. Je leur dit: « Vous pourriez parler en français, s'il vous plaît, je suis fatiguée ». Et puis, ça me fatigue le fait de les entendre parler anglais et de tous ces trucs soit technologie soit musique, des choses que je ne connais pas des fois. Quand tu ajoutes la langue à ça, je me dis mais je les connais même pas (ah, ah). Je ne sais pas de quoi ils parlent. Je leur dis. J'ai l'impression qu'Andie, il suit plus que moi à ces moments-là parce que c'est sa langue. C'est moi en fait. Je crois que le plus grand rejet, s'il y en a eu un, c'est moi. C'est moi qui à des moments rejettent l'anglais parce que j'ai peur qu'il n'y ait pas assez d'équilibre.

**Page 144 - (Sophie, 2012, I 198-200)**

Elle dit que c'est fatigant de tout le temps entendre l'anglais. Et aussi, tous les jours, elle parle anglais avec les gens et c'est pas sa langue alors elle aimerait bien pouvoir parler avec sa famille quand même en français. Et puis, je comprends, parce qu'elle est française aussi et si elle entend tout le temps l'anglais.

**(Sophie, 2012, I 92-98)**

Je pense qu'on parlerait tous en anglais et il y aurait ma mère derrière qui fait « en français ! » (Ah, ah) ... Elle veut qu'on parle français quand on est ensemble parce que, la plupart du temps on parle anglais ensemble parce que mon père, son niveau de français est moins bien que le niveau d'anglais de ma mère. Alors, je sais pas, je sais pas pourquoi on parle anglais, je crois parce que nos vies se passent en anglais. Ma sœur, son copain, il est anglais. Mon frère, il parle pas le français à l'université.

**Page 151 - (Marc, 2014, I 206-208)**

Je parle français. J'ai un accent français quand je parle anglais. Tous les gens pensent que je suis français, mais en fait je suis pas vraiment français puisque je suis en fait un espagnol.

**Page 152 - (Sophie, 2012, I 127-131)**

- Est-ce que cela te faisait-il sentir un peu différente ?
- Oui, et j'aimais lorsqu'on était en ville que les gens pouvaient entendre que moi et ma mère, on parlait français.
- Tu te sentais pas du tout gênée d'être différente.
- Non, j'aimais bien.

**Page 155 - (Isabelle, 2011, l 155-158)**

Au début j'essayais de rencontrer d'autres français maintenant j'essaye plus. Mais par l'intermédiaire de certains français on en rencontre d'autres. Il avait des réunions de français auxquelles j'allais. J'y vais plus jamais parce que je me sens bizarre, j'ai l'impression d'une église ou... tu sais (rires)

**Page 156 - (Isabelle, 2011, l 414-428)**

Et après une fois que j'étais avec lui et que j'étais, si tu veux, retirée de tout ce que j'avais de familier avant, tout d'un coup je me suis rendu compte qu'il y avait quelque chose qui me manquait, une part de moi qui me manquait. Et quand je cherchais des amies, des filles, des copines, je me disais pour avoir quelqu'un à qui me confiais... de toute façon, avec les mecs, on parle moins d'émotions déjà. Mon mari, lui, il dit qu'il n'en a pas. Il fait semblant. Je sais qu'il en a un peu (ah, ah). Mais, avec les copines, c'est vrai qu'au début, je pensais que si j'allais bien me faire comprendre, ça devait être avec quelqu'un en français. Et je pensais que ce n'était pas juste à cause de la langue mais je pensais que le genre d'émotions que j'avais, c'était des émotions françaises, tu vois c'était mais maintenant je ne le pense plus ça... J'avais l'impression si tu veux qu'il y avait une personnalité française que c'était un peu une personnalité culturelle quoi, qu'il y avait des choses que je ressentais que peut être une anglaise ne ressentait pas...J'avais l'impression si tu veux qu'il y avait une personnalité française que c'était un peu une personnalité culturelle quoi, qu'il y avait des choses que je ressentais que peut être une anglaise ne ressentait pas.

**(Isabelle, 2011, l 442-444)**

J'essayais de retrouver quelque chose de mon enfance ou j'essayais de me retrouver moi-même peut-être et quand tu rencontres quelqu'un c'est jamais comme toi.

**Page 157 - (Isabelle, 2011, l 474-479)**

Ouais, j'ai l'impression que la langue et l'enfance, c'est très relié si tu veux. J'ai pensé que pour moi, ce qui restait de moi, ce qui m'avait construite, c'était ça. C'était cette culture française, la langue française ben c'est pas faux donc mais c'était important. C'était quelque chose que je voulais garder, que j'avais peur de perdre. Je crois qu'on a tous peur de perdre son enfance. Donc au niveau émotionnel, ça représentait cela, je crois, le rapport entre la langue et l'enfance.

**Page 157 - . (Isabelle, 2011, l 430-440)**

Et puis, j'ai changé. Je suis devenue plus anglaise aussi. Alors, j'ai commencé à, peut-être que j'ai développé des émotions anglaises, je sais pas, mais en tout cas ma façon de penser

a changé. Maintenant, j'ai pas l'impression qu'une copine doit être anglaise ou française ou aucune nationalité en fait. C'est sûr c'est plus facile de se comprendre quand on parle tous les deux la même langue mais pas toujours. Maintenant que je travaille avec beaucoup d'étrangers, je me rends compte qu'il y a des gens très très attachants avec qui la communication est assez, enfin par les mots, est assez restreinte ; des gens qui quand même qui ressentent des choses très vite donc en tout cas cette croyance que j'avais au début elle a changé maintenant. Je cherche pas des amies françaises. D'ailleurs au début j'essayais de rencontrer des Français et puis souvent j'étais déçue parce que c'était pas des gens comme moi.

**(Isabelle, 2011, I 449-459)**

Je pense que de toute façon j'étais plus émotionnelle avant. Quand j'étais jeune, j'étais un petit peu plus... c'était le roller coaster, tu sais, (ah, ah) et maintenant, j'ai appris à... je suis plus équilibrée émotionnellement je pense et donc pour moi c'est plus devenu le truc le plus important. Une amie, c'est pas nécessairement quelqu'un avec qui partager des émotions. Maintenant, c'est autre chose, c'est surtout faire des trucs ensemble, avoir un intérêt commun. Bon, c'est vrai que je considère aussi que c'est quelqu'un que je peux appeler pour donner des bonnes ou des mauvaises nouvelles, tu vois c'est quelqu'un qui connaît un peu ma vie... donc, mais il y a moins d'émotions. Je pense c'est un truc de jeunesse.

**(Sophie, 2012, I 267-279)**

Je trouvais qu'elle était une bonne prof mais il y a tout le temps des enfants qui vont pas aimer une prof. Si j'entendais qu'il y avait un de mes amis qui avait un problème avec ma mère ou, ça m'énervait parce que moi je savais qu'elle était quelqu'un de bien et que nous on s'amusait. Mais à l'école, il fallait qu'elle soit prof. Elle pouvait pas être marrante tout le temps. Ça, ça m'énervait des fois parce que j'aimais pas que les gens parlent méchamment de ma mère. Et puis, j'aurais bien aimé des fois avoir plus de, moins de, parce qu'elle était pas à l'école tous les jours mais elle était à l'école trois fois par semaine je crois. J'aimais pas qu'elle soit à mon école, si je faisais quelque chose, ma prof le disait puis elle me voyait avec certains amis, que si elle les aimait pas, nah, nah, nah...