



## **Family as a language policy regime: Agency, practices and negotiation**

**Anik Nandi, Alliance University, India**

**Anastassia Zabrodskaia, Baltic Film, Media and Arts School, Tallinn University, Estonia**

### **Symposium format:**

- **Symposium Multimodal**

### **Symposium mode:**

- **Hybrid**

### **Sub-themes:**

- **LINGUISTIC SOCIAL ISSUES:** linguistic (in)justice, power, advocacy, attitude & bias, diversity-emancipation, discriminations, ethnicity and gender, ideology, language & social justice
- **LANGUAGES IN SOCIETY:** bilingualism, multilingualism, plurilingualism, multilingual classroom, translanguageing, literacy & literacies, heritage language, home language, migrants, deaf, sign/gesture
- **RESEARCH:** methods, approaches and (collaborative) practices

### **Short abstract in English:**

Multilingual practices are influenced by actors, such as caretakers and the family that is seen as a site where languages are managed, learned and negotiated (Spolsky 2007, 2012; Schwartz 2010). Family is understood as an intermediate level between the individual and society. Language policies often generate a wide range of emotions that might bind people on the national level (migrants vs. receiving population; minorities vs. majorities) together or reinforce ethno-cultural boundaries between them. The nature of top-down language policies greatly affects the coping ability of families with the demands of everyday social life. All minority or indigenous families strive to shape the linguistic environment to maximize the chances of social success for their members. This symposium searches for case studies that attempt to connect the analysis of top-down language discourses with the analysis of bottom-up reactions to them on the example of family life history formats. Here, language transmission is a complex phenomenon that has different dimensions. The theoretical objective of this symposium is to contribute to the family language policy and planning field by providing an attempt, using scholarly knowledge, to foster social cohesion and sustainable development within diverse linguistic societies.

### **Argument:**

All parts of the world have seen a marked increase in cultural and linguistic diversity in the 21st century. Multilingual practices are influenced by actors, such as caretakers and the family that is seen as a site where languages are managed, learned and negotiated (Spolsky 2007, 2012; Schwartz 2010). Furthermore, to emphasise the importance of the interaction of children, caretakers and external environment, family is also understood as an intermediate level between the individual and society. Here, language transmission is a complex



phenomenon which has different dimensions (e.g. psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, synchronic vs. diachronic), each having its own regularities on processes and outcomes. This symposium aims to understand the dynamics of indigenous and minority language speaking families and their grassroots-level language practices in the home and community to either maintain or revive the minority language in various multilingual settings where one or more languages are the linguistic custodian. It is our understanding that family language policies and planning issues should not be seen as actions on a passive object, but in a dynamic interaction with other factors that all shape the sociolinguistic situation in a particular geographic place. It is often the case that language legislation issues having formally the same legal force overall territory of the country still have a different efficacy and effect on different regions and, thus, families living there. The language policies and linguistic practices of broader continental or global nature may also affect the language situation in a given territory among members of one particular family. It is our hope that such an approach would promote a more dynamic understanding of family language planning in its interaction of other forces in the process of shaping the linguistic environment in a given geographical area. Language policies often generate a wide range of emotions that might bind people on the national level (migrants vs. receiving population; minorities vs. majorities) together or reinforce ethno-cultural boundaries between them. The nature of top-down language policies greatly affects the coping ability of families with the demands of everyday social life. All minority or indigenous families strive to shape the linguistic environment to maximize the chances of social success for their members. This symposium searches for case studies that attempt to connect the analysis of top-down language discourses with the analysis of bottom-up reactions to them on the example of family life history formats. The theoretical objective of this symposium is to contribute to the family language policy and planning field by providing an attempt, using scholarly knowledge, to foster social cohesion and sustainable development within diverse linguistic societies.

Schwartz, M. (2010) Family language policy: Core issues of an emerging field. *Applied Linguistics Review* 1: 171–192.

Spolsky, B. (2007) Family language management: Some preliminaries. In *Studies in Language and Language Education: Essays in Honour of Elite Olshtain*, eds. Anat Stavans and Irit Kupferberg, 429–449. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press.

Spolsky, B. (2012) Family language policy – the critical domain. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 33: 3–11.