FAMILY BILINGUALISM AND HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CYPRUS MIGRANTS

BILINGÜISMO FAMILIAR Y ENTORNO DE ALFABETIZACIÓN EN EL HOGAR EN EL CONTEXTO MIGRANTE DE CHIPRE

Sviatlana Karpava
University of Cyprus, Cyprus
karpava.sviatlana@ucy.ac.cy

Abstract

The home literacy environment (HLE) involves various oral and written interactions amongst children and parents in a family (Aram & Levin, 2002; Leseman & de Jong, 1998). HLE affects reading and writing development via formal and informal literacy activities (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Through direct and indirect conditions, HLE may provide opportunities and experiences to children (Burgess, 2011; Burgess et al., 2002). This study examined the HLE of Russian-speaking families in Cyprus and its effects on heritage language (HL) use, maintenance and transmission as well as language and literacy development in minority and majority languages. Eighty families residing in Cyprus participated in the study: 40 mixed-marriage and 40 Russian-speaking immigrant families, and data was collected through mixed methods. In other words, data collection instruments included written questionnaires, oral semi-structured interviews and observation, which focused on parental demographics, education, literacy habits and activities, writing and reading beliefs regarding minority and majority

languages (Burgess et al., 2002). Results indicated that Russian-speaking parents in this immigrant context realise the importance of (early) child literacy experiences at home and try to enhance these experiences, both in Russian and the majority language(s), via (in)direct teaching and code/meaning-focused shared activities. Different factors affecting the HLE of Russian-speaking immigrants in Cyprus include family type, socio economic status (SES) level of parents' education, personal trajectories and experience, linguistic and cultural identities, plans for residency, and their children's education and career.

Resumen

El entorno de alfabetización en el hogar (HLE) implica varias experiencias de interacción oral y escrita de los niños y los padres en una familia (Aram & Levin, 2002; Leseman & de Jong, 1998). El HLE afecta el desarrollo de la lectura y la escritura a través de experiencias de alfabetización formales e informales (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Las condiciones directas e indirectas de HLE brindan oportunidades y experiencias a los niños (Burgess et al., 2002; Burgess, 2011). En este estudio examinamos el HLE de familias de habla rusa en Chipre y cómo afecta el uso, mantenimiento y transmisión de la lengua heredada (HL), así como el desarrollo del lenguaje y la alfabetización en lenguas minoritarias y mayoritarias. Ochenta familias estaban bajo investigación: 40 de matrimonio mixto y 40 familias de inmigrantes de habla rusa que residían en Chipre. Se implementó la recolección de datos con métodos mixtos; El análisis se basó en las respuestas de los participantes a cuestionarios escritos y entrevistas semiestructuradas orales, así como en observaciones con un enfoque en la demografía de los padres, la educación, los hábitos y actividades de alfabetización, las

creencias de escritura y lectura sobre lenguas minoritarias y mayoritarias (Burgess et al., 2002). Los resultados del estudio indicaron que los padres de habla rusa en contextos de inmigrantes se dan cuenta de la importancia de las experiencias (tempranas) de alfabetización infantil en el hogar y tratan de mejorar estas experiencias tanto en ruso como en el (los) idioma (s) mayoritario (s) a través de la enseñanza (in) directa y actividades compartidas centradas en el significado. Diferentes factores afectan el HLE de los inmigrantes rusos en Chipre, como el tipo de familia, SES, nivel de educación de los padres, trayectorias de vida y experiencia, identidades lingüísticas y culturales, estatus en la sociedad, planes futuros de residencia, educación y carrera de sus hijos.

Palabras clave: entorno de alfabetización en el hogar, prácticas y estrategias de alfabetización en el hogar, alfabetización en la primera infancia.

1. Introduction

There is an interconnection between successful academic development, reading and writing skills and their early development, which are based on phonological awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary and cognitive abilities as well as on the home literacy environment (HLE), home literacy practices and strategies, the socioeconomic status (SES) of the family and their migration background (Niklas & Schneider, 2013). Children can acquire initial linguistic competencies even before they go to school if their parents provide adequate sufficient help and support. However, considering individual variability would be advisable, especially the children's cognitive abilities and environmental factors (Dowker, 2005), HLE, whether they attend kindergarten and for how long (Sylva et al., 2004).

SES, migration background and HLE are closely connected (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). For example, migrant children's linguistic competencies can be negatively correlated with the number of different languages spoken at home (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Methodologically, previous research has entailed analysing data obtained via observations of the family environment (Roberts et al., 2005) and from questionnaires focused on the (children's) books read in the household (Hood et al., 2008), including the number of books, frequency of parents reading books together with children, watching TV and library visits (Rashid et al., 2005).

According to Sénéchal and LeFevre (2001), a positive learning environment during childhood has a positive, long-lasting effect. The HLE can be categorised as active (e.g. when a parent reads a book with a child) or passive (when a child sees a parent reading a book). Analysis should take both into consideration. Researchers regard the first as more effective in the development of early reading (Burgess et al., 2002; Niklas & Schneider, 2013), receptive and expressive vocabulary and later advanced reading performance (Sylva et al., 2004). Research findings have suggested that the precursors of literacy skills development are phonological awareness (Schatschneider et al., 2004), rich vocabulary (Torgesen, 2002), phonological working memory (Archibald & Joanisse, 2009) and early letter knowledge (Torppa et al., 2006). In contrast, such non-specific precursors as intelligence and rapid naming can predict writing skills and later reading (Schatschneider et al., 2004).

This study examines the HLE and home literacy practices and strategies of Russian-speaking families in Cyprus and how they affect the development of multilingual early child literacy. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides an overview of the theories

and previous research on HLE, types of literacy activities and multilingual early child literacy. Section 3 introduces the research approach, the results of which are presented in section 4 and discussed in section 5. Section 6 concludes the paper.

Accordingly, we have formulated the following research questions:

1. What factors affect the HLE of Russian immigrants in Cyprus?

2. What types of home literacy practices (passive vs active/formal vs informal/didactic vs exposure) do parents implement to facilitate child literacy development?

3. Which languages (Russian, Greek or English) are emphasised in their child emergent literacy and language practices?

2. Home Literacy Environment and Child Literacy Development

The home literacy environment is vital for young children's emergent literacy development (Burgess et al., 2002; Niklas & Schneider, 2013). The focus of the home literacy model (HLM; Sénéchal, 2006; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002, 2014) is primarily on the printed materials and parent–child interactions (Krijnen et al., 2020) rather than on a large variety of other activities and types of parent–child interactions that facilitate children's literacy development. Frequent, consistent literacy activities with children have a positive effect on their emergent literacy skills (Burgess et al., 2002; Niklas & Schneider, 2013), including both oral language and code skills (Krijnen et al., 2020; Lonigan et al., 2013; Sénéchal et al., 2001). Oral language skills include the ability of a child to process spoken and written language, listen and comprehend the text and narrate, along

with lexicon knowledge (Krijnen et al., 2020). In comparison, code skills comprise letter knowledge and word reading, the ability to interpret the code of written language (Krijnen et al., 2020), and phonological skills (Lonigan et al., 2013). Formal reading development stems from emergent literacy development (Hoover & Gough, 1990), comprehension and decoding skills.

The HLM (Sénéchal, 2006; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002) suggests that parents and children can engage in either formal or informal joint activities, based on interacting with print, that can enhance the development of children's emergent literacy skills and phonological awareness prior to formal literacy instruction in school. Formal activities focus on the text itself and are related to children's code skills, such as learning the alphabet. Meanwhile, informal activities are associated with children's oral language skills, focusing on such aspects as attention and shared reading. Many studies conducted within the framework of the HLM (Sénéchal et al., 2017) have either supported its claims that oral language development prior to primary schooling enhances early phonological awareness but not early code skills (Hood et al., 2008; Manolitsis et al., 2013) or refuted them (Kalia & Reese, 2009; Manolitsis et al., 2011), showing that code skills do depend on oral language development (Kendeou et al., 2009), leaving no clear answer of how oral language, code skills, and phonological awareness are interrelated (Krijnen et al., 2020).

Some studies providing evidence in support of the HLM were conducted in families with high socioeconomic status in English-speaking settings whose members spoke English and French characterised by high orthographical complexity (Hood et al., 2008; Sénéchal, 2006; Sénéchal & LeFevre 2002, 2014; Skwarchuk et al., 2014). Different findings have emerged from research focused on

families from lower socioeconomic (Carroll, 2013; Sparks & Reese, 2012), L1 backgrounds (opaque-Chinese, English vs transparent-Korean, Greek, Finnish-orthography) and country settings such as China, Korea, India, Greece and Finland (Chen et al., 2010; Kalia & Reese, 2009; Manolitsis et al., 2011; Manolitsis et al., 2013; Silinskas et al., 2010, 2012, 2013). These studies differ, either in line with the HLM (Chen et al., 2010; Manolitsis et al., 2013) or (partially) not (Carroll, 2013; Kalia & Reese, 2009; Manolitsis et al., 2011; Silinskas et al., 2010, 2012, 2013; Sparks & Reese, 2012).

Kalia and Reese (2009) found that informal literacy activities triggered the development of both oral language and code skills. In contrast, Sparks and Reese (2012) suggested that only code skills were affected. While Carroll (2013) found no correlation between formal literacy activities and code skills, Silinskas et al. (2010, 2012, 2013) indicated that this correlation was negative. Overall, various studies' findings suggest that the quality of the home literacy environment (HLE) and children's literacy development depend on socioeconomic status, parental education and the orthography (deep vs shallow) of the language or languages spoken in the home (Hoff, 2006, 2013).

Many parents rely on school for code skills development and pay little attention to these skills during home literacy activities with their children. Bilingual children are more exposed to the minority than the majority language at home, which can have a negative impact on their competence and performance in the majority language (Hoff, 2006, 2013). That said, Cárdenas-Hagan et al. (2007) and Dixon (2011) found the evidence contradictory. All these factors make investigating diverse populations (including families with different educational levels and socioeconomic status, varying family language policies, home language and linguistic and migration

backgrounds) essential, as well as implementing a mixed-methods approach (Krijnen et al., 2020).

Home literacy activities such as storytelling and mealtime conversations can enhance oral language skills development (Curenton et al., 2008), while rhyming games support children's code skills and phonological awareness (Levy et al., 2006). Based on this phenomenon, Krijnen et al. (2020) proposed distinguishing between (non)print home literacy activities focused on oral language versus those supporting code skills. The HLM does not deal with the didactic approach, according to which child literacy activities can involve direct instruction (e.g., teaching new words or the letters of the alphabet) or more child-centred activities in the form of play (e.g., parents talk to their children or take part in an educational game with relevant exposure to language and print) or a combination of both (Hannon, 2003). Parental education, cultural background and schooling experience can determine the choice of either teaching or exposure activities (Lynch et al., 2006; Reese et al., 2012).

Most researchers have considered formal literacy activities primarily didactic. Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) and Sénéchal et al. (2017) proposed a distinction between formal and informal activities based on a focus on print versus a focus on meaning. Meanwhile, Krijnen et al. (2020) added other criteria to this distinction between didactive and exposure approaches, yielding four categories:

− oral language exposure (including shared reading and listening to stories the child tells);

− code skills exposure (including playing letter games and rhyming);

- oral language teaching (including teaching new words and having the child repeat new words); and

- code skills teaching activities (including teaching the letters of the alphabet, practicing name writing) (p. 212).

Accordingly, oral language skills are developed via language exposure and oral language teaching, while code skills come from code exposure and code teaching. Phonological skills are related indirectly to all activity types through either code skill or oral language skills (Krijnen et al., 2020).

Age, gender, home language, home literacy environment, children's literacy development, and their interrelations (Hoff, 2013) are critical factors. Parents adjust their teaching behaviour depending on their children's performance (Manolitsis et al., 2011; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014; Silinskas et al., 2013). A positive atmosphere in class, child–parent interaction and feedback all help develop child literacy skills. Considering the families' linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic background is essential, as these factors can affect child–parent interaction patterns and children's literacy development (Hoff, 2013; Kalia & Reese, 2009; Manolitsis et al., 2011; Sparks & Reese, 2012).

The current study investigates the HLE, including immigrant families' child literacy activities and their perceptions of literacy learning. We have sought to identify factors (L1, culture, identity, SES, level of education and others) affecting the HLE of Russian immigrant families in Cyprus. Presumably, both Russian and Cypriot Greek social and cultural contexts play a significant role in HLE development and the child literacy learning process, starting from a very early learning age in immigrant households in Cyprus.

2.1. Theoretical Framework of Cross-cultural Sensitivity

The home literacy environment is vital for young children's emergent literacy development (Burgess et al., 2002; Niklas & Schneider, 2013). The focus of the home literacy model (HLM; Sénéchal, 2006; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002, 2014) is primarily on the printed materials and parent–child interactions (Krijnen et al., 2020) rather than on a large variety of other activities and types of parent–child interactions that facilitate children's literacy development. Frequent, consistent literacy activities with children have a positive effect on their emergent literacy skills (Burgess et al., 2002; Niklas & Schneider, 2013), including both oral language and code skills (Krijnen et al., 2020; Lonigan et al., 2013; Sénéchal et al., 2001). Oral language skills include the ability of a child to process spoken and written language, listen and comprehend the text and narrate, along with lexicon knowledge (Krijnen et al., 2020). In comparison, code skills comprise letter knowledge and word reading, the ability to interpret the code of written language (Krijnen et al., 2020), and phonological skills (Lonigan et al., 2013). Formal reading development stems from emergent literacy development (Hoover & Gough, 1990), comprehension and decoding skills.

The HLM (Sénéchal, 2006; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002) suggests that parents and children can engage in either formal or informal joint activities, based on interacting with print, that can enhance the development of children's emergent literacy skills and phonological awareness prior to formal literacy instruction in school. Formal activities focus on the text itself and are related to children's code skills, such as learning the alphabet. Meanwhile, informal activities are associated with children's oral language skills, focusing on such aspects as attention and shared reading. Many studies

conducted within the framework of the HLM (Sénéchal et al., 2017) have either supported its claims that oral language development prior to primary schooling enhances early phonological awareness but not early code skills (Hood et al., 2008; Manolitsis et al., 2013) or refuted them (Kalia & Reese, 2009; Manolitsis et al., 2011), showing that code skills do depend on oral language development (Kendeou et al., 2009), leaving no clear answer of how oral language, code skills, and phonological awareness are interrelated (Krijnen et al., 2020).

Some studies providing evidence in support of the HLM were conducted in families with high socioeconomic status in English-speaking settings whose members spoke English and French characterised by high orthographical complexity (Hood et al., 2008; Sénéchal, 2006; Sénéchal & LeFevre 2002, 2014; Skwarchuk et al., 2014). Different findings have emerged from research focused on families from lower socioeconomic (Carroll, 2013; Sparks & Reese, 2012), L1 backgrounds (opaque-Chinese, English vs transparent-Korean, Greek, Finnish-orthography) and country settings such as China, Korea, India, Greece and Finland (Chen et al., 2010; Kalia & Reese, 2009; Manolitsis et al., 2011; Manolitsis et al., 2013; Silinskas et al., 2010, 2012, 2013). These studies differ, either in line with the HLM (Chen et al., 2010; Manolitsis et al., 2013) or (partially) not (Carroll, 2013; Kalia & Reese, 2009; Manolitsis et al., 2011; Silinskas et al., 2010, 2012, 2013; Sparks & Reese, 2012).

Kalia and Reese (2009) found that informal literacy activities triggered the development of both oral language and code skills. In contrast, Sparks and Reese (2012) suggested that only code skills were affected. While Carroll (2013) found no correlation between formal literacy activities and code skills, Silinskas et al. (2010, 2012, 2013) indicated that this correlation was negative. Overall, various studies'

findings suggest that the quality of the home literacy environment (HLE) and children's literacy development depend on socioeconomic status, parental education and the orthography (deep vs shallow) of the language or languages spoken in the home (Hoff, 2006, 2013).

Many parents rely on school for code skills development and pay little attention to these skills during home literacy activities with their children. Bilingual children are more exposed to the minority than the majority language at home, which can have a negative impact on their competence and performance in the majority language (Hoff, 2006, 2013). That said, Cárdenas-Hagan et al. (2007) and Dixon (2011) found the evidence contradictory. All these factors make investigating diverse populations (including families with different educational levels and socioeconomic status, varying family language policies, home language and linguistic and migration backgrounds) essential, as well as implementing a mixed-methods approach (Krijnen et al., 2020).

Home literacy activities such as storytelling and mealtime conversations can enhance oral language skills development (Curenton et al., 2008), while rhyming games support children's code skills and phonological awareness (Levy et al., 2006). Based on this phenomenon, Krijnen et al. (2020) proposed distinguishing between (non)print home literacy activities focused on oral language versus those supporting code skills. The HLM does not deal with the didactic approach, according to which child literacy activities can involve direct instruction (e.g., teaching new words or the letters of the alphabet) or more child-centred activities in the form of play (e.g., parents talk to their children or take part in an educational game with relevant exposure to language and print) or a combination of both (Hannon, 2003). Parental education, cultural background and

schooling experience can determine the choice of either teaching or exposure activities (Lynch et al., 2006; Reese et al., 2012).

Most researchers have considered formal literacy activities primarily didactic. Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) and Sénéchal et al. (2017) proposed a distinction between formal and informal activities based on a focus on print versus a focus on meaning. Meanwhile, Krijnen et al. (2020) added other criteria to this distinction between didactive and exposure approaches, yielding four categories:

– oral language exposure (including shared reading and listening to stories the child tells);
– code skills exposure (including playing letter games and rhyming);
– oral language teaching (including teaching new words and having the child repeat new words); and
– code skills teaching activities (including teaching the letters of the alphabet, practicing name writing) (p. 212).

Accordingly, oral language skills are developed via language exposure and oral language teaching, while code skills come from code exposure and code teaching. Phonological skills are related indirectly to all activity types through either code skill or oral language skills (Krijnen et al., 2020).

Age, gender, home language, home literacy environment, children's literacy development, and their interrelations (Hoff, 2013) are critical factors. Parents adjust their teaching behaviour depending on their children's performance (Manolitsis et al., 2011; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014; Silinskas et al., 2013). A positive atmosphere in class, child–parent interaction and feedback all help develop child literacy skills. Considering the families' linguistic, cultural and

socioeconomic background is essential, as these factors can affect child–parent interaction patterns and children's literacy development (Hoff, 2013; Kalia & Reese, 2009; Manolitsis et al., 2011; Sparks & Reese, 2012).

The current study investigates the HLE, including immigrant families' child literacy activities and their perceptions of literacy learning. We have sought to identify factors (L1, culture, identity, SES, level of education and others) affecting the HLE of Russian immigrant families in Cyprus. Presumably, both Russian and Cypriot Greek social and cultural contexts play a significant role in HLE development and the child literacy learning process, starting from a very early learning age in immigrant households in Cyprus.

3. Study
3.1. Participants

Our participants included 80 Russian-speaking families residing in Cyprus, comprising 40 mixed-marriage (Russian wife and Greek Cypriot husband) and 40 Russian-speaking (both spouses Russian) immigrant families. Both husbands and wives took part in the research, with ages ranging from 28 to 45 years. Their mean age of arrival to Cyprus was 27.3 years, and their mean length of residence in Cyprus was 6.5 years. The participants came from a mid-to-high socioeconomic and educational background. Our respondents reported having university degrees and were employed in the IT or business spheres, in the public or private sectors. They had well-paid jobs in Cyprus in occupations such as accountants, economists, IT experts, teachers, engineers, managers, psychologists, artists, fashion designers, doctors, office clerks, hairdressers and sales assistants, with a relatively high degree of literate and symbolic content in their daily

job activities (based on work content items: e.g., use of paper and pencil, written reports, and computers vs. manual tools and heavy machines (Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Leseman & de Jong, 1998)), see Table 1. A few of the Russian mothers were housewives and took care of their children at home. The respondents came from various former Soviet states/republics, such as Russia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Latvia, and their L1 was Russian. Apart from their native language, they knew such languages as English, Greek, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Romanian, Turkish, Spanish, Latvian and Georgian. The children in the participating families were from 2 to 16 years old, but at least one chid was from 2 to 5 years old and attended public or private kindergartens and schools in Cyprus, as the research was also focused on early, emerging literacy.

Table 1: *Participants*

Participants		Mixed Russian-CG	Immigrant Russian
N		40	40
Age	Mean	33	31
	Min.	29	28
	Max.	45	43
	SD	2.1	1.9
LoR	Mean	11.5	5.9
	Min.	1	1
	Max.	16	13
	SD	3.99	5.21
AoO	Mean	31.2	29.5
	Min.	27	28
	Max.	44	42
	SD	3.2	3.6
Mothers	Employed	32	12
	Housewives	8	28
Husbands	Employed	40	40

Children		Mixed Russian-CG	Immigrant Russian
Age	Mean	9.3	8.1
	Min.	2	2
	Max.	16	16
	SD	3.51	2.9
Gender	Male	25	19
	Female	15	21

Our research began with convenience sampling to access the participants. At a later stage, we implemented a snowball sampling technique in which the initial group of participants suggested other potential participants who were members of the Russian community in Cyprus. First, we contacted the participants. Next, we visited them at home in various geographical areas of Cyprus, both urban and rural: Larnaca, Nicosia, Limassol, Paphos and Agia Napa. We informed them about the research procedures and ethical considerations and that they had the right to withdraw at any time.

3.2. Materials and Procedure

A snowball sampling technique was implemented in order to access the participants; the initial group of participants (who were recruited via social networks and in Russian community centers and complementary schools) suggested other potential participants, who were members of the Russian community in Cyprus. The researcher visited them at their homes in various geographical areas of Cyprus, including both urban and rural areas, such as Larnaca, Nicosia, Limassol, Paphos and Agia Napa. The participants were informed about the research procedures and ethical considerations, and had the right to withdraw at any time should they have wished to do so.

Our analysis was based on the data obtained via written questionnaires and oral semi-structured interviews and drew upon ethnographic observations of bilingual / multilingual immigrant families in Cyprus. The research tools were designed by the researcher based on the previous research (Karpava et al., 2018, 2019; Leseman & de Jong, 1998; Otwinowska & Karpava, 2015). Our efforts focused on parental demographics, education, literacy habits and activities, writing and reading beliefs concerning minority and majority languages (Burgess et al., 2002), HLE, type of home literacy practices (formal vs informal/didactic vs exposure; Krijnen et al., 2020; Lynch et al., 2006). In endeavouring to consider the views of the whole family regarding the role of parents in child literacy development, we queried/observed both parents and children regarding literacy opportunities, instruction quality, cooperation and social-emotional quality (Leseman & de Jong, 1998); the literacy activities of parents and older siblings and joint literacy activities involving the child (Manolitsis et al., 2013; Manolitsis & Sarri, 2019).

The researcher visited the house of the participants several times over one year as part of a bigger project on linguistic development of bi-/multilingual children. Each visit was around for one-two hours depending on the participants' availability. First, there was an informal communication and preparation for the linguistic testing of the children. The parents were asked to fill in the written questionnaire and to take part in an interview. Then, the researcher tested the child(ren) and observed their communication with their parents, relatives and siblings. The families were willing to show the literacy and educational resources that they have at home and use with their children.

The aim of observations and field notes was to record lived experiences, linguistic behavior, FLP, HLE, literacy activities, interactions, various types of communications, relationships and artifacts, the emotions and knowledge of our participants, families, and to provide "thick descriptions" of what was observed in the naturalistic setting of the homes (Bratich, 2018; Curdt-Christiansen, 2020). We were focused on the physical place (homes, number of books available, educational material in different languages, computers, digital tools and applications), social actors (parents, children, grandparents, relatives), interactions (language use, topics, emotions, tones, voices, (non)verbal expressions), sequences (FLP, HLE, routines, activities, culture-related rituals and celebrations), and time (language-related activities and events) (Ciesielska et al., 2018; Patton, 2015). The researcher, being a member of the Russian community in Cyprus, had the role of complete participant and observer-as-participant, immersed in the research context, which allowed them to obtain an insider view of the researched community (Curdt-Christiansen, 2020; Cohen et al., 2011; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Participant observation allowed the researcher to gain access to the field, establish trust and rapport, to be involved in the participants' social life around languages, their HLE and FLP, literacy practices, and their experiences, thoughts and relationships (Atkinson, 2015; Boccagni & Schrooten, 2018; Jorgensen, 2015; Taylor et al., 2016).

We also examined the quality and quantity of time that the parents spent with their children, including literacy activities: child–parent interactions, joint literacy activities, learning the alphabet, reading books, writing, playing games, watching educational and entertaining programs, speaking, drawing together, listening to

music, singing songs, telling stories, and using gestures, all of which comprise the emergent literacy of a child. We also explored knowledge sharing, social connections, scaffolding and guided participation, the number of books in the household, and the frequency of visits to the library (Vandermaas-Peeler et al., 2011). We provided the opportunity to both mothers and fathers to express their views regarding their home literacy strategies and child's emergent literacy practices, their engagement and perceptions.

We implemented interviews for data collection as one of the most efficient tools for qualitative research (Foley et al., 2021). Interviews allowed us to investigate the individual's experiences, beliefs or constructions related to their language practices, multilingualism, multiliteracy, HLE, FLP, child literacy, home/heritage/immigrant language use, maintenance and transmission (Rolland et al., 2020). As we interviewed bilingual/multilingual speakers, we chose the language that the participants found more convenient for them to speak (mother tongue) (Holmes et al., 2013) as this can affect their autobiographical narratives, memory, emotional perception and expression (Dewaele, 2018). We were able to conduct interviews, taking affiliative and empathic, emotional aspects into consideration (Prior, 2016), attending to body language and paralinguistic cues, creating a safe and comfortable environment for the participants (Rolland et al., 2020), in line with ethical considerations (De Costa et al., 2020). The interview questions were based on the questionnaire; the interview data were transcribed, coded and analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The interviews (30–60 minutes long) were conducted in Russian and then translated into English for analysis and presentation. The data were recorded, transcribed, thematically

coded and analysed in line with the grounded theory research method (Willig, 2008). We applied iterative and recursive content analysis to the data to reveal thematic patterns (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). The data were thoroughly reviewed to find repeating themes. Next, the emergent themes were coded with keywords and phrases, and then the codes were grouped into concepts and categories hierarchically. The participants' questionnaires and observational field notes were an additional source of valuable data, which allowed us to apply triangulation in the data collection and analysis, enhancing the validity, reliability and generalisability of the results.

4. Results

The analysis of the data from the questionnaires, interviews and in-home observations revealed specific differences and similarities between mixed-marriage and Russian immigrant families in Cyprus. Overall, both types of families emphasised formal didactic approaches regarding child literacy practices at home. The parents tended to choose oral language teaching and code skills teaching. They had been influenced by the way they were taught and by the teaching methods in the Russian kindergartens and (pre-)primary schools in Cyprus and Russia (or former USSR republics). The parents, both mother and fathers, focused on print rather than on meaning. The families were concerned about the necessity to teach their children to read letters, syllables, words, phrases and sentences before they should attend school. For example, one parent who reflected on teaching their children said, "I decided to teach my daughter to read at the age of 4.5 using the ABC book, children's primer, but this was too early for her" (Parent 21). A second parent reported:

> *My daughter attends Greek school. There was an attempt to teach her to read in Russian when she was 5 years old, but I failed. This summer she mastered half of the ABC book. … She is 7 years old now. Now she reads both in Greek and in Russian.* (Parent 13)

Some children in the study did not appear ready to be taught the code without exposure to oral language. The age and the maturity of a child, whether he or she is ready for learning and has relevant knowledge and skills, are crucial factors to be taken into consideration. Some of the parents did understand this phenomenon and expressed readiness to spend time and put in the effort to combine both didactic and exposure approaches, involving teaching and exposure to code and oral language. One parent noted, "My daughter preferred cartoons. There are some videos. She does not like books" (Parent 36). Another parent had a similar experience, saying, "They prefer cartoons! I think that you just need to keep trying and spend 1–2 years on real print books; otherwise, the child will never love them. There should be a chain – a book-mother-enjoyment/pleasure" (Parent 78).

Parents should demonstrate real effort and persistence. Children's individual differences should be taken into consideration as well as the number of children in the family and the amount of time available to parents. Quite often, mothers and fathers will devote more time to their first child than subsequent one(s). For example, one participant stated:

> *With my older daughter, I was reading a lot of books. She required that I read child poem books, and then she started reciting these poems. She enjoys reading till now, but with my younger I was "lazier", and I was not reading so much*

> *… cartoons and things like this, and as a result, her speech*
> *is worse, and she reads less.* (Parent 45)

Another parent described this difference, saying, "Yes, you have experience, but there is no more excitement and inspiration, your stress and fatigue accumulate … sure … each child deserves a lot of time and engagement" (Parent 17).

While some parents chose a game-based approach for learning alphabet letters via exposure, others believed that older children could be an example for younger ones. For example, one parent asserted, "I am not a supporter of reading from the cradle; everything should be done on time. We were playing with alphabet letters. … The children really liked the game" (Parent 4). Another said, "The most important is to develop well … in the correct way … the older child. … Then, their siblings will take an example from him/her" (Parent 9).

Many parents were worried about their children's knowledge of the majority language, Greek or English, and that they [children] might mix two or three languages. One parent responded,

> *I will not start the Russian alphabet with my son earlier*
> *than 4.5–5 years old, and I will not touch reading since we*
> *have chosen the English [kindergarten, school], so I agree*
> *with some teachers that the child might have a mixture. …*
> *Let him first learn and practice English.* (Parent 63)

The parents shared their parenting experience and the belief that motivation and interest on the part of a child were decisive factors that could trigger the development of code and oral language. One parent remembered, "My daughter began to show some interest in Russian letters. It's never too late to start learning letters, but it's

never too early, so if the child is interested, play, compare, draw" (Parent 54)

The parents indicated that they tried to combine a focus on the code and the meaning in implementing creative approaches. At the same time, they acknowledged their social environment: they were in a non-native country, their children were exposed to many languages and, in many cases, their children attended majority-language schools, meaning that they needed to prioritise their needs as far as which language to focus on and learn first to avoid confusion. They also emphasised the role of the school and teachers. For example, one parent explained:

> *Russian letters … my daughter started to learn at the age of 4. We bought the ABC book in poems. I was constantly reading, then we bought a big alphabet poster and stuck it on the wall … reading … well … she got interested in reading after the age of 6, we bought the primary reader, but I do not insist, I am afraid to overload her. First, I was downloading various alphabet games on the phone. … She was sitting and playing. … Ok … she liked it. … I think that next year, we can deal with the Russian language more seriously.* (Parent 3)

Another parent said,

> *In our case, we have focused on the "school" language [English or Greek]. The Russian language will not disappear.… We speak Russian at home … with our older son. Russian was the first; then we had to catch up with English. With the younger, we started Russian at a later stage, and he perfectly caught up. … We also "sculpted" letters from plasticine, dough, clay … laid out sticks, drew on the sand, wrote a name. … For a child to become*

> *interested in the language in the future, a good teacher is needed.* (Parent 12)

Some of the parents strictly followed the guidelines their children's teachers and educators suggested, which might negatively affected the development of the heritage language. One parent reported,

> *Our children attend the English-speaking kindergarten. They are 3 years old, and the director has forbidden to learn the Russian alphabet at home until the age of 4, until the stage when the children will be comfortable with/master English, only then it will be possible to start learning Russian. ... She told us that this hinders the learning process. The children mix English and Russian phonetics/pronunciation.* (Parent 23)

The parents also spoke about wanting a better future for their children, relating this goal to their knowledge of the majority language(s), finding opportunities to study at the English-speaking school in Cyprus, getting a prestigious education and their children continuing their studies at a university abroad to attain a successful career and well-paid job. Thus, the parents perceived the Greek and the English languages as the tool or as a resource for their children regarding their education and future employability, while they associated the Russian language as a symbolic link with their homeland, culture and traditions. Because the majority language environment may present an obstacle to heritage language use, maintenance and transmission, such parents must invest consistent effort, along with the children's interest and willingness. One parent spoke of this difficulty in the following words:

> *If there is an interest [on the part of a child], then it needs to be nourished. The difficulty is that we live in the English-speaking environment here. Therefore, at home, you can detect letters on objects, find them in the surrounding environment. My son learned to read at the age of 3.5 years old, but we did not use the ABC book, only games with cubes. … I was constantly writing him letters from fairy-tale characters, I was signing his drawings and wrote down his impressions in the album. But the best of all were magnetic letters, [where] he himself went to the refrigerator and "built" the words. … The motivation to read appears when they understand the meaning of words.* (Parent 32)

The parents from both groups (mixed-marriage and monolingual families) mentioned trying to provide as many opportunities for their children in terms of literacy (minority and majority languages) as they could. They spoke of buying books and educational resources in Russian, English and Greek. They also tried to be involved in joint activities, such as reading together; telling and retelling stories; watching educational programmes, films and cartoons; going to the cinema, theatre, cultural events, festivals, libraries or book shops. One parent described their efforts as follows:

> *We have three children, one girl and two boys. Our house is full of books; our grandparents bring books from St Petersburg, Russia, [and] we can also order online. Our younger daughter likes fairy tales and ABC books. Our sons, who are older, prefer to use a tablet or a computer with different educational games. We also have Greek books, as our younger goes to the Greek primary school, and English books as our boys attend English gymnasium. Yes, there is a mixture of resources at home. We also have different friends … mainly Russian, but also Greek and*

> *English. We do not differentiate based on the language principle. As for cultural events, they are not so many in Cyprus, but still, we try to go there.* (Parent 49)

High workload and/or economic restriction could make it difficult for some parents to spend enough time with their children and engage in joint literacy activities. Many of the families had nannies whose L1 might be Russian, Greek or English. Consequently, their children were exposed to varied input, which affected their literacy development. As one parent put it,

> *I do not know what happens in other families, but in our case, it is tough. We try our best to spend more time with our kids but we are too busy. My husband is at work all day. Before I was at home with my kids it was great, but now I have to be at work till 15.00, so we have a nanny. She speaks only English. It is not ideal but this is the only option we can have right now. Our parents are in Russia and cannot help.* (Parent 56)

Our findings indicated that nearly all of the parents praised their children for their literacy achievements (in minority or majority languages). The parents supported their younger ones, serving as a model for them in terms of literacy skills, expressing recognition of their success and literacy development, showing understanding by interacting with them, explaining, guiding and scaffolding, as one parent explained in some detail:

> *Oh, they always wait for our praise or small gifts. I mean when they recite a poem or have learnt a letter from an alphabet and have drawn it in an album, they need encouragement. They need to be motivated; otherwise, I think that they will stop doing it, learning Russian.* (Parent 61)

Heritage language use, maintenance and support required consistent effort on the parents' part; they needed to be willing to invest time and follow through. Some parents found the process difficult or too time-consuming or reported various social factors that prevented them from engaging in this effort. For many of them, sending a child to kindergarten or (pre-)primary school offered a solution involving teachers/educators supporting, guiding and interacting with them. One parent described this option as follows:

> *Of course, the teachers know better; they have knowledge and experience of how to work with children. This is their job. … What we do … well, we have sent them to Russian classes on Saturday … pre-primary level … and you know, they are doing well.* (Parent 74)

Family type (mixed-marriage vs monolingual immigrant) and other variables, such as SES, parents' education level, occupation, the tendency for integration into Cyprus society, type of residency plans (temporary vs permanent), social networking, linguistic and cultural identities determined the family language policy and choice of language(s) at home: Russian, Greek, English or a combination. One parent described code-switching, code-mixing and/or translanguaging, a common pattern of linguistic behaviour in bilingual/multilingual families:

> *We are a mixed-marriage family. My husband is a Greek Cypriot; he knows English as well. First, we were using English for communications; then I learned Greek, so we started code-switching. With kids, I try to use Russian, but it happens that I can code-switch to Greek, especially when my husband is around. As for friends and relatives, there is a mixture: Greek, English, Russian.* (Parent 80)

In mixed-marriage families, both parents and children employed a varied linguistic repertoire. Usually, the Russian-speaking mothers used Russian with their children, while the Greek Cypriot fathers spoke Greek or Cypriot Greek if the family followed a one-parent-one-language approach. Their children had relatives and friends in Russia and Cyprus with whom they communicated online or face-to-face. One parent reflected,

> *Well, what can I say, our child is exposed to at least three languages on a daily basis. I speak Russian with him, or at least I try to do it. … You know … sometimes it is not only what we want. … If I am in a hurry, I mix languages, I code-switch … Greek, Russian, sometimes English. My husband speaks Cypriot with our son. Of course, this is their language; when we are together, we speak Greek. He goes to the English school, so he speaks English there, but also Greek and Russian with his friends … and yes … grandparents in Russia and in Cyprus.* (Parent 1)

Notably, the choice of (pre-)primary educational institution depended mainly on the family's socioeconomic status and their plans for residence in Cyprus as well as career plans for their children. As Greek-speaking public or private kindergartens or (pre-)primary schools are free of charge or do not have high fees, any family can send their children there in comparison to private Russian-speaking or English-speaking kindergartens and (pre-)primary schools. For the families who participated in our study, this choice was closely related to child literacy development, reading and writing skills, oral language and code skills in a particular language (Russian, Greek or English), as their children spent most of the day in the school setting, which was crucial for their further secondary and tertiary education. One parent spoke of their choice, saying,

> *Taking just the financial side into consideration … if I cannot afford education of my child in the UK, why I need to send him to the English kindergarten or school. My son will be able to learn English in a tutor centre later. We have chosen a Greek kindergarten. We live in Cyprus, and our son needs to know Greek. It is a public kindergarten, near our house. At home, we speak Russian so he knows his native language.* (Parent 5)

The parents who chose English-speaking kindergarten thought it the best option for their children, and they were ready to invest money to contribute to further education abroad and better career opportunities. In particular, English-speaking kindergartens represent a new trend even among monolingual Greek Cypriot families, as one parent observed:

> *[We chose] English kindergarten, as we like the English system of education more than the Russian one, but we keep extra classes in Russian. We plan that our daughter will go to the English primary and secondary school and then study abroad, Europe or USA, so she definitely needs English.* (Parent 14)

It seemed easier for Russian immigrant families to use, maintain and transmit heritage language; their home language was Russian, and they built their HLE around it. In contrast, the mixed-marriage families had to exert much more effort, involving at least two (Greek and Russian) and sometimes three (Greek, English and Russian) home languages, which should be taken into account in HLE and child literacy development. In mixed-marriage families, Cypriot fathers took a leading role in the development of Greek or English language, oral language and code skills, while mothers tended to support their children in their literacy development in Russian.

Accordingly, the latter read books together and tried to maintain a Russian-speaking network of friends so that they could spend leisure time together and their children could have other Russian-speaking friends and practice speaking Russian. If they sent their children to learn various hobbies, such as music, sport, art or creative activities, they chose Russian-speaking tutors. Thus, to develop a child's bilingual/multilingual literacy, a family had to invest much effort, time and resources. Also needed were consistency, willingness and mutual agreement between the parents because so many factors were involved. In the end, not many families succeeded in bilingual/multilingual child literacy; most stuck to one language, Greek or English. As one parent described:

> *We have friends who are Russian speakers. Both the husband and the wife are from Russia, so it is easy for them; they speak only Russian at home, so their children speak only Russian, even though they have sent them to the English kindergarten. In our case it is quite a challenge. There is a mixture: Russian with me, Greek with my husband. Children well, mainly Greek among themselves as they go to Greek school, Russian with my relatives and friends, Cypriot with the local ones. I try to preserve Russian as much as I can, but it is difficult. I take them to Russian classes; we speak Russian when we are at home and with friends.* (Parent 25)

Representatives of the Russian community in Cyprus understood that they needed to support their children in heritage language acquisition and use, but they were also interested in their children's literacy development in the majority language(s). Consequently, they provided their children with relevant resources: books, reading and writing materials, access to Internet programmes.

They appreciated the role of extended family members, especially grandparents, in the child's emergent literacy, and the role of the Russian community itself as its members communicated with each other, either face-to-face or online. They spoke of exchanging books and materials and shared useful information about different types of kindergartens and schools, private lessons or extra-curricular activities. They also formed bonds together and organised meetings. One parent shared the following observations:

> *I am a member of the Russian community in Cyprus. I feel this, especially via various social groups. Mothers are concerned about the education and the future of their children, so we can exchange information, find optimal solutions, get advice, especially regarding books and educational resources, kindergartens and schools. I think that there is this feeling of solidarity and many things in common to be discussed.* (Parent 37)

Not all Russian-speaking parents decided to send their children to Russian kindergartens or schools but found another solution for developing heritage language literacy. One example given was Russian private classes, two times per week or even once per week, on Saturday, where their children could engage in sociocultural literacy practices: learning the Russian alphabet, syllable and word reading and writing, Russian songs and poems, Russian culture and traditions. They described pre-primary classes in Russian or creative groups as really fun for their children. As one parent noted,

> *Oh, our twins are really lucky. We found a very good teacher. She has private classes of Russian two times per week. Our children are happy; they really like to go there. We can feel the difference, after half a year, there is a real*

> *progress. They know Russian alphabet letters, they name*
> *them and draw them, they can recite short Russian poems*
> *and sing songs. They have learned a lot of cultural issues.*
> (Parent 41)

Our in-home observations revealed that members of the Russian community in Cyprus tried to maintain a close link with their motherland in linguistic and cultural terms. Their households were full of Russian books, souvenirs, and symbolic and cultural items. At the same time, they were influenced by the societal majority language(s) and culture(s). They reported a symbiosis of various languages and cultures at home. Thus, their material culture reflected their varied linguistic repertoire, multilingualism and multiculturalism.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors affect the HLE of Russian immigrants in Cyprus?

2. What types of home literacy practices (passive vs active/formal vs informal/didactic vs exposure) do parents implement to facilitate child literacy development?

3. Which languages (Russian, Greek or English) are emphasised in their child emergent literacy and language practices?

Regarding the first research question it was found that the quality of the HLE and the type of child literacy activities depended on various factors, such as the family's socioeconomic status, employment, family language policy, parents' level of education, life trajectories, social network, number and age of children in the family,

quality and quantity of time the parents could spend with their children, parents' motivation and willingness, and frequency and duration of the exposure to various languages, partially supporting Hoff's (2006, 2013) findings.

Not all parents could be actively involved in home literacy activities and child–parent interactions due to high workload. These parents relied on kindergarten or pre-primary schools, tutoring centres, grandparents, relatives or nannies at home. The higher the SES and education level of the participants, the more opportunities for literacy development they provided to their children. These solutions included buying educational resources, engaging in shared book reading, sending their children to pre-primary educational institutions and centres, and visiting Russia and other former Soviet states/republics. The parents admitted that when a child spends even a short period of time in Russia or L1 country (e.g. during their winter or summer holidays), this has a positive effect on their socialization and literacy development in Russian. They learn more about Russian culture and traditions, they meet their relatives and friends, and have a lot opportunities for oral and written communication. Reflecting that recognition of their success is essential for children, especially concerning their multilingual literacy, these immigrant parents made a point of praising their children and acknowledging their children and acknowledge their progress in implicit and explicit ways.

With respect to the second research question, the results of our study show that the majority of the parents of both types of families (mixed-marriage and Russian immigrant) tend to have formal and didactic approaches to the emergent literacy development of their children, which is in line with previous findings by Niklas and Schneider (2013) and Krijnen et al. (2020). Quite a few of the parents

participating in our study emphasised code skills rather than oral language skills. They were accustomed to engaging in literacy activities with print materials. In other words, they emphasized the importance that their children should know the alphabet letters and be able to read before entering formal schooling.

In general, the parents appreciated the role of teachers and educators in the pre-primary school and kindergarten, speaking of their help, guidance and support for their children's early literacy development. They followed the professionals' advice and instructions and expressed satisfaction with the type and number of various activities their children were involved in, concerning both the majority and minority languages. Only few parents were concerned with the negative effect of the minority language on the development of the majority language(s) (Dixon, 2011; Hagan et al., 2007). Most of the parents believed that the use of L1 at home and exposure to L2/L3/Ln outside the home enriched their children's linguistic repertoire and enhanced their multilingual and multicultural communicative competence.

Nevertheless, it is vital to note that some parents made time, effort and have a special way of engaging in child-centred, exposure-based, meaning and oral language-focused literacy activities with their children. They engaged in these activities creatively via narratives, rhyming games, and mealtime conversations, either in Russian only or incorporating Greek and English (Curenton et al., 2008; Levy et al., 2006). The higher the parents' level of education, the more willing they were to incorporate teaching in their child literacy activities, which also depended on their cultural background and schooling experience (Lynch et al., 2006; Reese et al., 2012). They tried to implement the same way of literacy development with their

children as their own parents did in the former Soviet Union. Didactic approach was also widely implemented at kindergartens and schools at the time of their childhood.

The study findings reveal that Russian-speaking immigrant parents realised the importance of HLE and their children's multilingual literacy development, though they emphasised formal literacy practices and code skills-oriented activities more (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002, 2014). They invested much effort into teaching their children to read and write, improving their pronunciation and enriching their lexicon. The participating parents found various activities efficient, such as reciting poetry, playing with alphabet cards, colouring pictures with letters, and drawing within the lines. Nevertheless, the primary responsibility for their children's literacy development, in their view, belonged to kindergartens and schools. They acknowledged the role of the teachers and were ready to follow the professionals' guidelines (Lynch et al., 2006), probably following the traditional skill-oriented conceptualisation of literacy that they had inherited from their parents.

As for the third research question, it appears that the choice of language for interaction and literacy activities depended on the family type: mixed-marriage or immigrant monolingual. Russian and/or Greek were chosen in the first case, while the latter used only Russian and sometimes English/Greek. Their sociocultural setting could explain the diversity of the participants' home literacy practices. Our participants were immigrants living in Cyprus, having to balance between the support and maintenance of the Russian language and the use of Greek, the language of the host country, and/or English, *lingua franca* on the island and worldwide.

Some parents managed to find the golden mean and establish multilingual child literacy development. In contrast, other families had to decide which language was their priority due to various factors and restrictions, such as lack of time, financial capabilities, family language policy, linguistic and cultural identities, reasons for immigration and staying in Cyprus, and plans for tertiary education and their children's anticipated career. Their situation was reflected in their strategies for family engagement in child emergent literacy practices. It is important to note that this study has certain limitations, which could be overcome by further research and analysis, in particular the implementation of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis and a larger participants sample.

6. Conclusion

The study aim was to explore the perspectives and perceptions of Russian-speaking parents in Cyprus regarding the HLE, types of child literacy activities, formal versus informal, didactic versus exposure, multilingual home literacy practices and family engagement strategies for their children's literacy development. The data analysis showed that Russian-speaking parents in an immigrant context in Cyprus recognised the importance of early childhood literacy experiences at home and tried to enhance these experiences, both in Russian and in the country's target language, via mainly formal, didactic, code skills-focused activities.

Both types of families (mixed-marriage and immigrant Russian families in Cyprus) tended to practise a more formal approach to their child's emergent literacy practices, focusing more on the code than on the meaning and emphasising teaching over exposure. They might have been affected by their linguistic

and cultural background and education, life trajectories, requirements of the majority schooling system, their sociolinguistic environment and their aspirations for integration into the target society and finding the best education and career route for their children. The parents emphasised the role of code skills and the ability to read before entering school for their children. They tended to follow the guidelines that they received from kindergartens and schools regarding skill-oriented and school-based schooled literacy practices. They also expressed significant respect and appreciation for the role of a teacher in the development of reading and writing skills.

A variety of factors affect the HLE of Russian immigrants in Cyprus. Among the most significant ones are family type, family language policy, social network, SES, level of parents' education, life trajectories and experience, linguistic and cultural identities, status in the society, future plans for residency and their children's education and career. Other factors that should be considered are extended family members (e.g., communication with grandparents online and offline, when they visited Cyprus or when children visited Russia), relatives and siblings, the number of children in a family, quality and quantity of the time that parents can spend with their children, frequency and amount of exposure to minority and majority languages, and parents' motivation and willingness to engage in home literacy activities. Notably, three languages – Russian, Greek and English – are essential for child emergent literacy and language practices in mixed-marriage Russian-Cypriot Greek families in Cyprus, in contrast to the emphasis on Russian and English to a certain extent in the case of monolingual Russian immigrant families residing on the island.

Overall, the parents in our study held a traditional conceptualisation of literacy focused on formal literacy practices and code skills-oriented activities as well as printed materials, depending on teachers and educators as role models for their children. They interacted with their children, providing opportunities and recognising the latter's progress and literacy achievements. Based on our findings, this study's results can prove useful for educational policymakers, preschool educators and other stakeholders who work with a multilingual population in Cyprus, as well as parents and teachers, to enhance early child literacy development in minority and immigrant groups of children, taking sociocultural factors into consideration, connecting home, school and community literacy.

References

Aikens, N., & Barbarin, O. (2008). Socioeconomic differences in reading trajectories: The contribution of family, neighbourhood, and school contexts. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *100*(2), 235–251. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.100.2.235

Aram, D., & Levin, I. (2002). Mother-child joint writing and storybook reading: Relations with literacy among low SES kindergartners. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, *48*(2), 202–224. https://doi.org/10.1353/mpq.2002.0005

Archibald, L., & Joanisse, M. (2009). On the sensitivity and specificity of nonword repetition and sentence recall to language and memory impairments in children. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, *52*(4), 899–914. https://doi.org/10.1044/1092-4388(2009/08-0099)

Atkinson, P. (2015). *For Ethnography*. London: Sage.

Boccagni, P., & Schrooten, M. (2018). Participant observation in migration studies: An overview and some emerging issues. In R. Zapata-

Barrero & E. Yalaz (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in European Migration Studies* (pp. 209–225). New York and London: IMISCOE. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76861-8_12

Bratich, J. (2018). Observation in a surveilled world. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 526–545). Thousand Oakes: Sage Publications.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. London: Sage.

Burgess, S. (2011). Home literacy environments provided to very young children. *Early Child Development and Care*, *181*(4), 445–462. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430903450384

Burgess, S., Hecht, S., & Lonigan, C. (2002). Relations of the home literacy environment (HLE) to the development of reading-related abilities: A one-year longitudinal study. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *37*(4), 408–426.
https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.37.4.4

Cárdenas-Hagan, E., Carlson, C., & Pollard-Durodola, S. (2007). The cross-linguistic transfer of early literacy skills: The role of initial L1 and L2 skills and language of instruction. *Language, speech, and hearing services in schools*, *38*(3), 249–259.
https://doi.org/10.1044/0161-1461(2007/026)

Carroll, C. (2013). *The effects of parental literacy involvement and child reading interest on the development of emergent literacy skills* [Doctoral dissertation, UW-Milwaukee].
http://dc.uwm.edu/etd/230/

Chen, X., Zhou, H., Zhao, J., & Davey, G. (2010). Home literacy experiences and literacy acquisition among children in Guangzhou, South China. *Psychological Reports*, *107*(2), 354–366.
https://doi.org/10.2466/04.11.17.21.28.pr0.107.5.354-366

Ciesielska, M., Boström, K. W., & Öhlander, M. (2018). Observation methods. In M. Ciesielska & D. Jamielniak (Eds.), *Qualitative Methodologies in Organisations Studies* (pp. 33–52). London: Palgrave McMillian. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65442-3_2

Cohen, L., Maion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education*. London and New York: Routledge.

Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2020). Observations and field notes: Recording lived experiences. In J. McKinley & H. Rose (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Researh Methods in Applied Linguistics* (pp. 336–348). London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367824471-29

Curenton, S., Craig, M., & Flanigan, N. (2008). Use of decontextualized talk across story contexts: How oral storytelling and emergent reading can scaffold children's development. *Early Education and Development*, *19*(1), 161–187. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409280701839296

De Costa, P. I., Lee, J., Rawal, H., & Li, W. (2020). Ethics in applied linguistics research. In J. McKinley & H. Rose (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in Applied Linguistics* (pp. 122–131). London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367824471-11

Dewaele, J. M. (2018). Why the dichotomy 'L1 versus LX User' is better than 'Native versus Non-native Speaker.' *Applied Linguistics*, *39*(2), 236–240, https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amw055

Dixon, L. (2011). The role of home and school factors in predicting English vocabulary among bilingual kindergarten children in Singapore. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, *32*(1), 141–168. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716410000329

Dowker, A. (2005). Early identification and intervention for students with mathematics difficulties. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *38*(4), 324–332. https://doi.org/10.1177/00222194050380040801

Foley, G., Timonen, V., Conlon, C., & Elliott O'Dare, C. E. (2021). Interviewing as a vehicle for theoretical sampling in grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *20*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920980957

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Routledge.

Hannon, P. (2003). Family literacy programmes. In N. Hall, J. Larson, & J. Marsh (Eds.), *Early Childhood Literacy* (pp. 99–111). Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608207.n9

Hoff, E. (2006). How social contexts support and shape language development. *Developmental Review*, *26*(1), 55–88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2005.11.002

Hoff, E. (2013). Interpreting the early language trajectories of children from low-SES and language minority homes: Implications for closing achievement gaps. *Developmental Psychology*, *49*(1), 4–14. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027238

Holmes, P., Fay, R., Andrews, J., & Attia, M. (2013). Researching multilinguality: New theoretical and methodological directions. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *23*(3), 285–299. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12038

Hood, M., Conlon, E., & Andrews, G. (2008). Preschool home literacy practices and children's literacy development: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *100*, 252–271. https://doi.org/10.1037/00220663.100.2.252

Hoover, W., & Gough, P. (1990). The simple view of reading. *Reading and Writing*, *2*(2), 127–160. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00401799

Jorgensen, D. (2015). Participant observation. In R. A. Scott & S. M. Kosslyn (Eds.), *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioural Sciences* (pp. 1–15). Oxford: Wiley Publications. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118900772.etrds0247

Kalia, V., & Reese, E. (2009). Relations between Indian children's home literacy environment and their English oral language and literacy skills. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, *13*(2), 122–145. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888430902769517

Karpava, S., Ringblom, N., & Anastassia Zabrodskaja (2019). Translanguaging in the family context: Evidence from Cyprus, Sweden and Estonia. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, *23*(3), 619–641. https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9182-2019-23-3-619-641

Karpava, S., Ringblom, N., & Zabrodskaja, A. (2018). Language ecology in Cyprus, Sweden and Estonia: Bilingual Russian-speaking families in multicultural settings. *Journal of the European Second Language Association*, *2*(1), 107–117. http://doi.org/10.22599/jesla.41

Kendeou, P., Van den Broek, P., White, M., & Lynch, J. (2009). Predicting reading comprehension in early elementary school: The independent contributions of oral language and decoding skills. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *101*(4), 765–778. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015956

Kohn, M., & Schooler, C. (1983). *Work and Personality: An Inquiry into the Impact of Social Stratification*. Norwood: Ablex.

Krijnen, E., van Steensel, R., Meeuwisse, M., Jongerling, J., & Severiens, S. (2020). Exploring a refined model of home literacy activities and associations with children's emergent literacy skills. *Reading and Writing*, *33*, 207–238. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145019099574

Leseman, P., & de Jong, P. (1998). Home literacy: Opportunity, instruction, cooperation, and social-emotional quality predicting early reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *33*(3), 294–318. https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.33.3.3

Levy, B., Gong, Z., Hessels, S., Evans, M., & Jared, D. (2006). Understanding print: Early reading development and the contributions of home literacy experiences. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *93*(1), 63–93. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2005.07.003

Lonigan, C., Purpura, D., Wilson, S., Walker, P., & Clancy-Menchetti, J. (2013). Evaluating the components of an emergent literacy intervention for preschool children at risk for reading difficulties. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *114*(1), 111–130. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2012.08.010

Lynch, J., Anderson, J., Anderson, A., & Shapiro, J. (2006). Parents' beliefs about young children's literacy development and parents'

literacy behaviors. *Reading Psychology*, *27*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02702710500468708

Manolitsis, G., & Sarri, E. (2019). *Home literacy environment: An evaluation of distinct dimensions in preschool years* [Paper presentation]. 18th Nordic Literacy Conference & the 21st European Conference on Literacy under the heading of Learning from the Past for the Future: Literacy for All. Copenhagen, 4–7 August 2019. http://cph2019.dk/

Manolitsis, G., Georgiou, G., & Parrila, R. (2011). Revisiting the home literacy model of reading development in an orthographically consistent language. *Learning and Instruction*, *21*(4), 496–505. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2010.06.005

Manolitsis, G., Georgiou, G., & Tziraki, N. (2013). Examining the effects of home literacy and numeracy environment on early reading and math acquisition. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *28*(4), 692–703. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2013.05.004

Niklas, F., & Schneider, W. (2013). Home literacy environment and the beginning of reading and spelling. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *38*(1), 40–50. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2012.10.001

Otwinowska, A., & Karpava, S. (2015). *MILD Questionnaire: Migration, Identity and Language Discrimina-tion/Diversity*. Pyla: University of Central Lancashire, UK, Cyprus, Unpublished Manuscript.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. Los Angeles, London and New Dehli: Sage Publications.

Prior, M. T. (2016). *Emotion and Discourse in L2 Narrative Research*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783094448

Rashid, F., Morris, R., & Sevcik, R. (2005). Relationship between home literacy environment and reading achievement in children with reading disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *38*(1), 2–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/00222194050380010101

Reese, L., Arauz, R., & Bazán, A. (2012). Mexican parents' and teachers' literacy perspectives and practices: Construction of cultural capital. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *25*(8), 983–1003. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2011.594818

Roberts, J., Jurgens, J., & Burchinal, M. (2005). The role of home literacy practices in preschool children's language and emergent literacy skills. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, *48*(2), 345–359.
https://doi.org/10.1044/1092-4388(2005/024)

Rolland, L., Dewaele, J.M., & Costa, B. (2020). Planning and conducting interviews: Power, language. In J. McKinley & H. Rose (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in Applied Linguistics* (pp. 279–290). London and New York: Routledge.
https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367824471-24

Schatschneider, C., Fletcher, J., Francis, D., Carlson, C., & Foorman, B. (2004). Kindergarten prediction of reading skills: A longitudinal comparative analyses. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *96*(2), 265–282. https://10.1037/0022-0663.96.2.265

Sénéchal, M. (2006). Testing the home literacy model: Parent involvement in kindergarten is differentially related to grade 4 reading comprehension, fluency, spelling, and reading for pleasure. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, *10*(1), 59–87.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532799xssr1001_4

Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, *73*(2), 445–460. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00417

Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. (2014). Continuity and change in the home literacy environment as predictors of growth in vocabulary and reading. *Child Development*, *85*(4), 1552–1568. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12222

Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J.-A. (2001). Storybook reading and parent teaching: Links to language and literacy development. In P. R.

Britto & J. Brooks-Gunn (Eds.), *The Role of Family Literacy Environments in Promoting Young Children's Emerging Literacy Skills* (pp. 39–52). San Jossey-Bass.
https://doi.org/10.1002/cd.10

Sénéchal, M., LeFevre, J., Smith-Chant, B., & Colton, K. (2001). On refining theoretical models of emergent literacy, the role of empirical evidence. *Journal of School Psychology*, *39,* 439–460. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4405(01)00081-4

Sénéchal, M., Whissell, J., & Bildfell, A. (2017). Starting from home: Home literacy practices that make a difference. In K. Cain, D. Compton, & R. Parrila (Eds.), *Theories of Reading Development* (pp. 383–408). John Benjamins.
https://doi.org/10.1075/swll.15.22sen

Silinskas, G., Kiuru, N., Tolvanen, A., Niemi, P., Lerkkanen, M., & Nurmi, J. (2013). Maternal teaching of reading and children's reading skills in Grade 1: Patterns and predictors of positive and negative associations. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *27,* 54–66. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindi f.2013.06.011

Silinskas, G., Leppänen, U., Aunola, K., Parrila, R., & Nurmi, J. (2010). Predictors of mothers' and fathers' teaching of reading and mathematics during kindergarten and Grade 1. *Learning and Instruction*, *20*(1), 61–71.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learn instruc.2009.01.002

Silinskas, G., Lerkkanen, M., Tolvanen, A., Niemi, P., Poikkeus, A., & Nurmi, J. (2012). The frequency of parents' reading-related activities at home and children's reading skills during kindergarten and Grade 1. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *33*(6), 302–310. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2012.07.004

Skwarchuk, S., Sowinski, C., & LeFevre, J. (2014). Formal and informal home learning activities in relation to children's early numeracy and literacy skills: The development of a home numeracy model. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *121,* 63–84. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2013.11.006

Sparks, A., & Reese, E. (2012). From reminiscing to reading: Home contributions to children's developing language and literacy in low-income families. *First Language*, *33*(1)*,* 89–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/0142723711433583

Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2004). *The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) Project: Final Report.* University of London.

Taylor, L. K., Bernhard, J. K., Grag, S., & Cummins, J. (2008). Affirming plural belonging: Building on students' family-based cultural and linguistic capital through multiliteracies pedagogy. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *8*(3), 269–294. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798408096481

Torgesen, J. (2002). The prevention of reading difficulties. *Journal of School Psychology, 40*(1), 7–26. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4405(01)00092-9

Torppa, M., Tolvanen, A., Poikkeus, A.-M., Eklund, K., Lerkkanen, M.-K., Leskinen, E., & Heikki Lyytinen, H. (2007). Reading development subtypes and their early characteristics. *Annals of Dyslexia*, *57*(1), 3–32. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11881-007-0003-0

Vandermaas-Peeler, M., Sassine, B., Price, C., & Brilhart, C. (2011). Mothers' and fathers' guidance behaviours during storybook reading. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *12*(4), 415–442. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798411417381

Ward, K., & Wolf-Wendel, L. (2004). Academic motherhood: Managing complex roles in research universities. *The Review of Higher Education*, *27*(2), 233–257. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2003.0079

Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology. Adventures in Theory and Method.* Open University Press.