

Social Participation and Language Ideologies: Family Language Policies in Icelandic Heritage Enclaves in North America

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Language policy according to Spolsky (2012) includes three components: Language management, language ideology and language practices. Each can be implemented officially or unofficially by governments and legislators in communities, families, and by individuals as they make decisions about language use. Blommaert (2007) suggests that decisions about language use follow layered scales from the strictly global macro level management of social structure to the strictly local or micro level of communications within families and between individuals (see also, Siiner, Hult & Kupisch, 2018; Pennycook, 2006). When addressing social participation of heritage speakers especially educational trajectories, official policies tend to promote a form of monolingualism or even multiple monolingualism and often reflect a deficit model where multilingualism/bilingualism is seen as detrimental to academic achievement. The reality of language use at the micro-level is usually not as clear cut and more akin to plurilingualism as speakers use the range of their linguistic repertoire to communicate and create meaning regardless of how the languages they use are delineated officially (Renata Emilson Peskova, 2021; Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2010; Garcia & Wei, 2014). Recently there has been increased interest in exploring the effects of micro level community and family language policies on heritage language speakers' linguistic development. Language ideologies are known to affect community and family language policies which in turn shape language practices within families and have a profound impact on children's cognitive development, identity construction and academic trajectories "(DeHouwer, 1999; Brice Heath, 1983).

This paper will discuss the ideologies and beliefs about literacy and plurilingualism in Icelandic heritage communities in North America. The findings presented in this paper are based on an extensive literature review of primary and secondary data sources (letters, diaries, interviews, narratives, recordings, newsletters and journals from both sides of the Atlantic) that describe home language practices and Icelandic heritage speakers' views about their heritage language and culture. These findings are supported by data collected during field trips to Icelandic language enclaves in North America in 1986, 2013, and 2014. In all 161 informants were interviewed about home and community language practices and views. Overwhelmingly, informants expressed the importance placed on literacy and home learning, and for many the promotion of active bilingualism which positively affected educational trajectories of the second and third generation of Icelandic heritage speakers. The findings are unique in that they allow us to examine the consequences of this ideology three to four generations later and demonstrate that plurilingualism in heritage speakers' homes can serve to promote positive social and educational experiences.

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