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# 'Then suddenly I spoke a lot of Spanish' – Changing linguistic practices and heritage language from adolescents' points of view

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## ABSTRACT

This article investigates the multilingual experiences of three Norwegian and Spanish-speaking adolescents with transnational backgrounds. Drawing on narrative analysis and positioning theory, the article seeks to understand how the adolescents position themselves in relation to different expectations of linguistic competence, identities, and their cultural and linguistic inheritance. By investigating adolescents' experiences of family multilingualism and heritage languages, as expressed in interviews and language portraits drawings (cf), the article adds to recent efforts in family multilingualism research toward understanding the experiences of multilingual children and adolescents. Moreover, the article expands on the current scholarly discussions of heritage language identities (cf), by shedding light on how adolescents hold complex multilingual experiences and how they continuously adapt to changing sociolinguistic circumstances within the family context.

## KEYWORDS

Multilingualism; adolescents; identity; linguistic repertoires; heritage language

## Introduction

This article investigates adolescents' experiences with languages in the family, particularly their experiences with the families' so-called heritage languages (hereafter, HLs). There are several theoretical efforts to define HL, such as He (2011, p. 587) who defines HL as "a language that is often used at or inherited from home and that is different from the language used in mainstream society". Multilingual families and parents' perspectives of language practices and ideologies have attracted considerable attention in sociolinguistic research during the past decades (e.g. King & Lanza, 2017). So have multilingual adolescents' language practices within urban school and peer contexts (e.g. Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou, 2003; Nortier & Svendsen, 2015). However, studies addressing adolescents' perspectives on language practices in the family, such as the ways in which adolescents engage in their HLs and negotiate family identities, are still scarce. This article contributes to fill this gap and asks the following research questions (hereafter, RQs):

- (i) How do young heritage speakers position themselves in relation to languages, identities, family members and different expectations of linguistic competences?
- (ii) How is the meaning of HLs negotiated by younger generations?
- (iii) How do they manage the challenges of changing sociolinguistic environments?

The RQs are explored qualitatively, by analyzing three young people's narratives and lived experiences with languages in the family as expressed through informal semi-structured interviews or conversations, where they also draw language portraits (Busch, 2017). Drawing on the linguistic-discursive form of the language portraits, the article employs a narrative analysis, more specifically

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positioning theory (Bamberg, 1997; Davies & Harré, 1990) as an analytical framework. The three participants, Matilda (17, female), Tania (13, female) and David (18, male), are adolescents from families where at least one of their parents have moved from a Spanish-speaking, Latin-American country to Norway, and they live in the same Arctic city (cf. methodology section and Johnsen, *in press a*).

The article is divided into four sections. In the first section, a brief overview of research on HL and multilingual adolescents in the family is given, as well as an outline of the conceptual framework, which draws on recent conceptualizations of HLs. In the second section, the participants, data and methods are specified and presented. The third includes a detailed analysis of narratives of the adolescents' past and present experiences of being multilingual and growing up multilingually. The last section entails a discussion of the results, emphasizing the dynamic, changing and relative dimensions of HLs and the adolescents' capacity to construct complex and multifaceted relations between (heritage) language and identities, and challenge, resist, negotiate and adapt to parents' (socio)linguistic expectations. The article sheds light on adolescents' identity constructions and social relationships in a family context, and adds to research on family multilingualism by emphasizing the importance of including adolescents' perspectives to understand the complexities of processes of language maintenance and change.

### ***Adolescents, heritage language and multilingual experiences***

Multilingual children and adolescents hold unique experiences and competences that may impact their everyday interactions in many ways. For example, Wei and Zhu (2013) show how a group of young Chinese University students in London create transnational, multilingual networks, and use their multilingual competences and heritages in transnational identity performances. Moreover, adolescents may use their experiences to challenge hegemonic language ideologies outside the home. Blackledge and Creese (2010) reports that students in a complementary school in the UK that teaches Bengali, in classroom interactions, often were imposed heritage identities by the teacher, and that the young students engaged in identity negotiations that subtly contested essentialist views of heritage taught in complementary schools by negotiating and questioning what constitutes 'language' and 'heritage'. While these studies show young people's HL experiences and HL identities in the educational domain and among peers, this article explores the perspectives and experiences of young people in the *family* arena.

Research on language ideologies and practices in the family has flourished during in the last decade, particularly in the field of Family Language Policy (hereafter, FLP) (e.g. King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008; King & Lanza, 2017). Language ideologies and linguistic practices in the family context may be diverging and even conflicting (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016; Fogle & King, 2013; Little, 2017; Melo-Pfeifer, 2015; Obojska, 2019a; Wilson, 2019). For example, Obojska (2019a) shows how a Polish father and his daughter hold diverging views of home language practices, suggesting that adolescents' language preferences play a role for the decisions regarding language practices in the home. Many parents have high expectations for their children's development in the HL (e.g. Curdt-Christiansen, 2016), which in turn may cause friction. Using language portraits (cf. Busch, 2016, see methods section), Wilson (2019) investigates the HL experiences of a French bilingual children and their parents in the UK. Her findings suggest that certain bilingual strategies employed by parents may impede family communication and potentially lead to disharmony. In a similar vein, Cho (2015) maps a number of factors facilitating and inhibiting Korean-American youths' development in their HL, and found that fear of criticism from more proficient speakers (e.g. family members) were one such inhibiting factor. Other studies also find that HL and majority language anxiety are prevalent in immigrants' lives both within and outside the family (Dewaele & Sevinc, 2016).

As Little (2017) argues in her study of attitudes and maintenance among HL families living in Britain, children may not share their parents' emotional and pragmatic motives for maintaining Hls and the links between HL and identity may therefore be substantially different for parents and children (see also Melo-Pfeifer, 2015). For example, the ways adolescents impact family language practices may not always fit the linguistic boundaries of 'whole' language (Johnsen, *in press b*). As Canagarajah (2019, p. 18) suggests, young people may socialize their parents into 'code mixed and switched or "styled" modes of HL communication (...)', similar to their linguistic practices with peers. Expanding on these insights, this article argues that investigating adolescents' perspectives on multilingualism is necessary to fully understand the dynamics of family multilingualism: Adolescents' multilingual experiences may enhance our knowledge on their lives and social relations both in and outside the family.

### ***Heritage languages, changes and linguistic repertoires***

Inheriting a language in the home may 'provide valuable personal, familial, and national resources or become a linguistic and cultural liability' (He, 2011, p. 587). The sociolinguistic realities of multilingual families are often complex, and include several different interactional encounters (not just parent-child), multiple learning modalities and the presence of languages and repertoires other than the HL<sup>1</sup> or 'home language' (Blommaert, 2017). Canagarajah (2019) argues that HL has traditionally been understood as primordial, pure and territorialized, a view that is often found in studies of family multilingualism where Hls have been conceived in a fishmanian perspective with a focus on the transmission of 'whole' languages and languages as bounded entities (e.g. Boyd, Holmen, Og, Normann, & Jørgensen, 1994). Canagarajah (2019, p. 13) challenges such traditional views of Hls, and suggests that more 'practice-based' ideologies, that views Hls as situated, social practices, are becoming more prominent in diaspora communities. Hls work as indexical resources, where linguistic features and identities are used to claim or symbolize a particular, or even desired, heritage and to construct in-group membership or family bonds. Deumert (2018) problematizes a static understanding of HL and cultures, and suggests that heritage is a 'process of human action and agency' rather than the possession of objects, artifacts and languages. In this process, children who learn Hls contribute in filling language practices with meaning (cf. Blackledge & Creese, 2010). Hls are learnt in relation to changing contextual dimensions and may change across time and space (Canagarajah, 2019; He, 2011). In other words, peoples' linguistic repertoires, and the meaning people attach to different linguistic resources, are influenced by their 'lived experience of language' (Busch, 2017). These linguistic experiences may be reproduced in contexts of everyday life, or, as in this study, through personal narratives (Busch, 2017). In a similar vein, Pujolar and González (2012, p. 139) suggest the term '*muda*' to label biographical moments where individuals enact changes in their linguistic repertoires. In times of globalization, translocal and transnational relocations are examples of such biographical moments that have (socio)linguistic consequences for families and individuals. This article adopts recent conceptualizations of Hls as its theoretical position, and assumes that Hls change across the lifespan, and are (as all languages) dynamic in relation to the contexts they are used in and to the biographies of HL speakers (Canagarajah, 2019; He, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup>In the Norwegian scholarly tradition, *HL* is rarely used in studies of minority languages, while the terms *hjemmespråk* ('home language') or *minoritetsspråk* ('minority language') are more frequent (NOU 2010:7, 2010), and are reproduced with similar primordial connotations as 'heritage language' (cf. Canagarajah, 2019)

## Data, methods and participants

The data consist of semi-structured interviews and language portrait drawings with three adolescent children from three different families, Matilda (17), Tania (13) and David (18). The data form part of a project on multilingual adolescents and their families, and the entire material include self-recordings of three multilingual families (ca 14 hours), semi-structured and follow-up interviews with parents and children (12 individual and group interviews), language portraits and ethnographic observations. Families with teenage children, and at least one parent having emigrated from a Spanish-speaking Latin-American country to Northern-Norway were recruited to the project through personal networks, and were contacted by mail or Facebook. The three participating families live in the same city, but differ otherwise in their trajectories and linguistic biographies. In the analysis, these differences are demonstrated by focusing particularly on how one adolescent from each family (Matilda (17), Tania (13) and David (18)) position Spanish as a linguistic resource.

## Methods

### Language portraits

Research with children may need different methodologies than research with adults (Smith-Christmas, 2017). In assessing young peoples' experiences, visual methods may enable a deeper understanding of the complexities of their language experiences and metalinguistic reflections (cf. Obojska, 2019b; Wilson, 2019). The Language Portrait method, which was developed in Vienna by the group *Spracherleben* (Busch, 2016) was therefore used. In the interviews, the portraits were used to gain insights into 'lived experiences of language' (Busch, 2017). The method offers agency to the subjects, and prevents the researcher from basing the interview on assumptions about the participant's linguistic repertoire. Language portraits as a method consists of an oral (an interview conversation) and a visual mode (a drawing).

In the visual mode the participants were asked to choose a color for each of the different languages, dialects or ways of speaking or communicating that meant something to them (previously or in the present). Thereafter, they were asked to place them upon the silhouette of a body (i.e. the language portrait). In the oral mode, the participants were asked to describe and explain their drawing and to talk about their linguistic repertoire (see Fig 1, Fig 2, 3 below). In addition, I asked further questions about the portrait and their linguistic practices. For the purpose of this article, I pay more attention to the linguistic-discursive mode of the language portraits than the visual mode. However, the drawings made by the participants are included in the analysis, because the drawing and narratives often reciprocally refer to each other (Busch, 2018, p. 5).

### The interviews and researcher role

The conversations about the language portraits were supplemented with informal semi-structured interviews. Both the drawing and the interviews were made in a place of the participants choice, either at their homes (Matilda and Tania) or in cafés (David). In the participants' homes, the parents were at times present, though engaged in other activities. Matilda and her sister Sol were interviewed together. As the analysis shows, these circumstances influenced the interview conversations: Diverging evaluations and experiences of language use surfaced during the interview, which provided access to individual family members' perspectives and ideologies (cf. Obojska, 2019a).

Interviews are interactional events and situated social practices, and the interview material is a product of a reality that is co-constructed between the present interactional participants. As such, the narrated events are of course not to be viewed as accurate representations of an objective reality (e.g. De Fina, 2009; De Fina & Perrino, 2011). By virtue of my role as researcher, I also formed part

of constructing meaning and possible outcomes of the conversations by leading the participants to narrate specific parts of their linguistic experiences and trajectories. For example, I informed the participants about by my interest in language use in the family as well as multilingualism in general. Also, my knowledge of the local community, my gender and age (female in her late twenties), as well as my background as an exchange student and traveler in Latin-America and as a learner of Spanish, may have motivated the participants to share their experiences. My knowledge of the participants and the material as a whole also influenced the analysis: Observing the family relationships during visits, interviewing the parents and listening to the recordings of family interaction offered a more in-depth understanding of the participants' linguistic practices, and made it possible to compare the participants' practices and statements across different situations.

The language of the interviews was one or more of our shared languages (Norwegian, Spanish or English) and was negotiated in that context. The data were transcribed in nVivo and ELAN and coded manually. The transcribed data are not standardized to any of the two written standard Norwegian varieties (*bokmål* and *nynorsk*), but represent the participants' colloquial speech with dialect and second-language Norwegian features (represented in the original transcript). Besides questions directly related to the language portrait, the semi-structured interview guide included two main themes: language practices (e.g. in school and with family) and identification and belonging (e.g. visiting relatives abroad, living in Norway, being multilingual). However, the interview guide was followed flexibly, and some topics received more attention as the conversational topics developed.

### **Data analysis**

The data were analyzed in different stages. First, after each interview or visit, I listened to the interviews, summarized the content and made notes of interest. Second, the interviews were transcribed and were subject to close listening and reading. Third, the data were divided into themes that were subject to further analysis. While some themes were predetermined by the interview guide (see above), new themes also emerged as a result of the methodological design and using language portraits. More specifically, the language portraits prompted a diachronic, biographical perspective, where experiences of facing and managing changing sociolinguistic environments often emerged as a topic of conversation. This particular topic was also a subject for discussion in some of the follow-up interviews. The analyzed excerpts were produced both as answers to questions regarding changes in their practices and as spontaneous stories of language experiences. In the data analysis process, all instances where participants talked about experiences of changing linguistic practices were listed and coded, and the accounts from one of the children in each family (the two oldest in the multi-sibling families) was chosen for a more detailed analysis.

Through narratives, individuals may re-contextualize the past by claiming particular identity positions and recounting particular bits of family histories or shared family memories. Using narrative analysis in combination with language portrait drawing offered an analytical framework for analyzing the participants' experiences and identity construction on different levels. The personal narratives that emerged were analyzed drawing on Bamberg (1997, p. 337) who, in his levels of positionality, differentiates three levels of identity positioning in narratives: Level 1 concerns how characters are positioned in relation to one another within the reported events. Level 2 concerns how the speaker position herself to the audience, and situates the narrator and the reported events in interaction. Level 3 builds on the two previous levels and examines how the narrator positions herself to herself and display identities that others can react to by approval or disapproval (see also Schiffrin, 2006, p. 209). These levels may, implicitly or explicitly, make references to social positions, identities or ideologies beyond the interview context (De Fina, 2013).

Moreover, for the group interview in the case of Matilda, I also have benefitted from the analytical perspectives in the small story approach (cf. Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). The small story approach aims to capture ‘tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, and shared (known) events, but it also captures allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell’ (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 381) and emphasizes how a teller and the audience may co-construct a story’s point, events and characters (Georgakopoulou, 2015, p. 260).

### **The participants**

Below follows a presentation of the three participants.

**Matilda (17)** is in upper secondary school at the time of the interviews, and lives with her little sister Sol (15, in secondary school) and her parents. Their mother is Norwegian, but has Sami roots on her grandmother’s side. Their father is from Peru, but has lived in Norway for more than 15 years. The family occasionally travels to Peru to visit relatives. In family interactions, the father switches between Norwegian and Spanish, but mostly addresses his daughters in Spanish. The two daughters report that they mostly answer him in Norwegian and sometimes in Spanish, and that they understand Spanish well. The mother speaks Norwegian, and understands Spanish. Both daughters take Spanish as a subject at school and Matilda reports to speak Spanish quite well.

**Tania (13)** lives with her mother who is born in Chile, but moved to Germany in early adulthood. There she met Tania’s dad, and Tania was born and attended primary school in Germany. Tania and her mother both report that they used to speak both Spanish and German back in Germany, because both Tania’s German dad and her mother spoke both languages well. They moved to Norway together three years ago, but the mother and Tania’s father are now separated (but still live in the same city), and the mother has a Norwegian partner who visits regularly. Tania attends secondary school. She reports to speak very little Spanish at home now, but she understands it well and she takes Spanish as an optional subject at school. In the self-recordings, Tania and her mother switches between German and Norwegian, and Spanish is used occasionally, particularly by the mother (cf. Johnsen, *in press a*)

**David (18)** is the oldest sibling in a family consisting of two parents and five children ranging in age from late teens to kindergarten. David was in his early teens when the family moved from Central America<sup>2</sup> to Northern-Norway. The family members report that they communicated mostly in Spanish when they lived in Central-America, although the father also spoke some English.<sup>3</sup> When moving to Norway, the family’s language use changed rapidly. In Norway, the family members started speaking increasingly more English. The parents’ work language became mostly English, and the children went from attending a Spanish-speaking school, to attending an international a school where the languages of instruction were English and Norwegian. The extensive use of English in the family is evident in the self-recordings, but Spanish is also used frequently (cf. Johnsen, *forthc. – a*). Norwegian is used occasionally by both parents and children. They frequently switch between the three languages.

### **Findings**

The analysis demonstrates different ways in which the adolescents position themselves in relation to the different languages in their repertoires.

<sup>2</sup>Name of country is omitted for anonymity purposes.

<sup>3</sup>The father has lived several places in his life, and English is one of his first languages. He did not speak Spanish when he first moved to the Central American country where he met his wife, but learned it gradually with her.



### Case 1: Matilda



**Figure 1.** Matilda's portrait: Matilda's portrait (from left: painting, body language  $\leftrightarrow$  care and love, technology – contact with the rest of the world, mum – Norwegian, dad – Spanish, English).

In her portrait, Matilda positions both Norwegian and Spanish as part of her repertoire, and connects a different colour (and language) to her mother and father, respectively. In Excerpt 1, the researcher explicitly asked Matilda to categorize herself. When asked directly about identity categories and whether she identifies as Norwegian or Peruvian, she explains that she feels like a mix of both:

#### Excerpt 1

1	Matilda	<i>for mæ e det egentlig, veldig – æ ser på mæ som en blanding enkli. æ</i>
2		<i>for me, really it's very – I see myself as a mix actually. I don't see</i>
3		<i>ser ikke på mæ som – æ ser på mæ som fullt norsk, fordi æ bor i</i>
4		<i>myself as – I do see myself as fully Norwegian, because I like live in</i>
5		<i>Norge liksom (.) og på måte derfor vil æ se på mæ litt mer norsk enn</i>
		<i>Norway. and in a way I would therefor see myself as a little more</i>
		<i>fra Peru, men for at æ ikke e fra peru. men en s – en veldig</i>
		<i>Norwegian than from Peru, but because I am not fra Peru, but still</i>
		<i>stor del av mæ e peruansk. så æ e jo halvparten av begge delan.</i>
		<i>a b – a very big part of me is Peruvian. so I am half of both.</i>



The explicit request clearly influences Matilda's answer: In comparison to the drawing where Matilda did not explicitly position language nor family relations as identity resources, she answers the explicit question by displaying awareness of territorialized understanding of identity and heritage and reproduces the indexical links between a territory and national identities. Despite positioning herself as 'half of both' (line 5), she hesitates to fully assign herself with a Peruvian identity since she is not 'from Peru' (line 4), as she says. In comparison, living in Norway seems to qualify to be 'fully Norwegian' (line 2).

Matilda and her sister were interviewed together, a setting that invited Sol and Matilda to comment on each other's accounts, which is shown in Excerpt 2 below. Sol contributes to Matilda's story by supporting her (line 5), encouraging her to tell more (line 8), and ultimately by sharing (and verifying) the memory Matilda tells about, and thereby co-constructs the narration (cf. Georgakopoulou, 2015). The presence and comments of her parents also impacted the course of Matilda's story and the positions she ascribes for herself and the story characters.

*Excerpt 2*

1	Researcher	<i>og da – korsk e det når dokker kommer dit da? e det bare –</i> and then – what is it like when you go there then? is it
2		<i>kan dokker svare på spansk da eller snakke dokker litt norsk og (.) når dokker e der?</i> just – can you answer in Spanish then or do you also speak some Norwegian (.) [when you are there
3	Matilda	<i>[ehm æ har – eh æ huske jo før så – så va æ veldig sjenert</i> ehm I've – eh I remember that before then – then I was very
4		<i>[med å åpne munnen min, når æ va der [mot familie,</i> shy about opening my mouth when I was there, to my family,
5	Sol	<i>(hvisker) [æ huske det (ler)</i> (whispering) [I remember that (laughing)
6	Matilda	<i>for at dem sku jo spørre om så mye rart. sånn veldig mye rart.</i> because they were asking about so much weird stuff. like a lot of weird stuff.
7	R.	<i>åja</i> right
8	Sol	<i>for eksempel?</i> for example?
9	Matilda	<i>æ vet ikke, det va – æ – æ huske ho ?en – ho søskenbarnet mitt ho s – ho sku få mæ</i> I remember she ?onc – my cousin she – she was going to make me
10		<i>til å prate så spurte ho om ting æ måtte svare på (.) og da –</i> speak so she asked about things I had to answer to (.) and then –
11		<i>da blei det på en måte bare flaut for ho bare tvingte mæ til å prate.</i> then it became just embarrassing because she was forcing me to talk
		<b>(five turns of clarification questions omitted)</b>
17	Mother	<i>da sprang du og gjømtæ dæ når ho kom (ler)</i> then you ran to hide when she came (laughing)
18	Matilda	<i>ja</i> yes
19	Sol	<i>ja (ler)</i> yes (laughing)
20	R.	<i>åja va det flaut (ler)</i> right, it was embarrassing? (laughing)
21	Matilda	<i>ja, men-</i> yes, but-
22	Father	<b>es que [name of cousin] queria tener contacto contigo</b> it's that [name of cousin] wanted to have contact with you
23	Matilda	<i>ja det skjønne æ jo</i> yes I certainly understand that

(Continued)

(Continued).

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24	Father	<b>por eso te preguntaba</b> therefor she asked you
25	Matilda	<i>ja. men æ var så sjenert</i> yes. but I was so shy

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Through their contributions, the family members position the researcher as the audience and themselves as possible coauthors of the story (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Sol asks for an example (line 8), and in line 17, the mother contributes by making these memories a joint experience, implying that she also remembers the events. Demonstrating knowledge of the events Matilda talks about, the mother creates a sense of community between them through their shared memories. Her father adds an explanatory account to Matilda's story (line 22), in Spanish, and hence provides an alternative position to the cousin forcing Matilda to speak. By highlighting how his family wanted to have contact with her, he implicitly presents an alternative to the projected 'threatening' position in Matilda's story and draws a link between the use of Spanish and family bonds. His interactional position is affirmed explicitly by Matilda in line 25.

The story in Excerpt 2 is prompted by the researcher's request that attempts to lead Matilda to narrate about specific places and more or less specific characters (lines 1–2). Matilda builds up a biographical narrative that serves to explain why she previously did not speak that much Spanish to her Peruvian relatives. In her narrative, Matilda positions herself in relation to her relatives by exemplifying how it affected her to be 'forced' to talk Spanish when she had limited competence in the language. In Matilda's narrative, her cousins somehow buttonhole her in their attempt of forcing her to speak Spanish, and Matilda characterizes herself as shy and embarrassed in such situations (cf. lines 3 and 25). In recounting this memory, Matilda creates indexical links between her competences in Spanish and interactions with her Spanish-speaking part of the family. In positioning herself as 'mute' in the past, Matilda expresses her lived experiences of how her relatives somewhat 'limit' her opportunities of participating in their joint family endeavour or community of practice.

Spanish has thus been for her a resource she could not automatically access (cf. Busch, 2017). Not accessing this language forced her into a passive position when visiting Spanish-speaking relatives, and represents an experience that could be linked to experiences of language anxiety (Cho, 2015; Dewaele & Sevinc, 2016). While it could be argued that the father's interruption could have prevented Matilda from expanding on her narrative, it is impossible to know if Matilda would have produced a more detailed account in a different context. Rather, the alternative explanation provided by the father's reminds us that narratives are always contextually bounded and results of interactional co-constructions. Moreover, it demonstrates how diverging opinions may surface in family interviews, and that different generations of diasporic families hold different social and linguistic experiences and interests (cf. Zhu, 2008; Obojska 2019a).

After her father's interruption (line 22), Matilda continues her narration, which is not (due to space limitations) included here. She compares previous visits to the latest visit which happened a few months before the interview took place. She explicitly constructs, as shown in Excerpt 3 below, a difference between her Spanish abilities *then* and *now*, and repositions herself: From narrating about a passive character who does not engage in communicating with her relatives, the characters in the second narrative are presented as more actively engaged and able to speak Spanish. She evaluates these events as 'a big transition':

## Excerpt 3

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30		<i>men ellers, med resten (implisitt: av familien)</i> but otherwise, with the rest (implicit: of the family)
31		<i>så va det <u>mye</u> letter. det va sånn stor overgang – overgang faktisk.</i> then it was a <u>lot</u> easier. it was a big transition – transition actually.
32		<i>for da plutselig kunne æ veldig mye spansk.</i> because then suddenly I knew a lot of Spanish.
33	Father	mm
34	Res.	åja right
35	Matilda	<i>da va det åsså det at æ torte å bare (.) prøve mæ liksom</i> then it was also that I dared to just, like try out,
36	Res.	mm
37	Matilda	<i>så æ vet no at nu hvis æ blir tvunge i en situasjon så kan æ-</i> so I know now that now if I get forced in a situation so I
38		<i>så kan æ ((snakke)) det flytanes. det e bare det å</i> can – I can ((speak)) it fluently. it is just that to
39		<i>faktisk e i den situasjonen, å være der</i> actually be in that situation, to be there.
40	Res.	<i>men følte du ikkje at du kunne det (snakke) flytanes før?</i> but did you not feel that you knew it (how to speak) fluently before?
41	Matilda	<i>nei</i> no
42	Res.	<i>nei</i> no
43	Matilda	<i>æ har vært veldig usikker liksom</i> I have been like very unsure.
44	Res.	mm
45	Matilda	<i>selv om man bur – æ burde egentlig skjont det fordi at, æ</i> even though one shou – actually, I should have understood it,
46		<i>høre jo spansk hele tia</i> because, well, I hear Spanish all the time.

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In the lines 30–39, Matilda creates a contrast between her past and present self by sketching a change in her ability to communicate. She highlights a positive change in her life (lines 31–32), and displays a capacity of speaking ‘fluently’ (line 38). By making these claims about who she is now, Matilda constructs a more agentive and self-confident self in those situations where she experienced being ‘forced’ to speak Spanish. She experiences that this development has implications for her ability to communicate with Peruvian relatives and her family relations, and Spanish is, today, positioned as an important resource for communicating and constructing a shared community of practice with her Spanish-speaking relatives. This position seems to be approved by her father and the researcher through their affirmative backchanneling (line 33) and affirmative responses (lines 36, 42 and 44).

In line 45, Matilda addresses her previous story-self and states that she ‘should have understood’. This evaluative part of the narrative can be understood as a way of providing a coherent identity within the narrative (cf. Bamberg, 2010a): She links her early childhood to the present by pointing at the fact that she has grown up hearing Spanish on a daily basis. The structure of the story indicates that she has experienced a personal as well as a linguistic development: Her Spanish competence has improved, and she does not feel that shy and embarrassed in such situations any longer. Thus, the aim of the story is perhaps not to explain what it was like before, but rather to index a personal and linguistic development that points to how she wants to be understood here and now; she is no longer

a 'victim' to her cousins' (and perhaps other relatives') attempts of forcing her to speak Spanish (cf. Excerpt 1).

Matilda does not mention any explicit biographical reasons for why she feels more confident and competent today. However, in other parts of the interview, she explains that she takes advanced Spanish classes at school, and also that she became friends with, and spoke Spanish, with a Latin-American exchange student. Her sister Sol has also chosen Spanish as one of the mandatory language subjects. As the next case exemplifies, formal language learning in school may become an arena where the adolescents negotiate and challenge the meaning of HL.

In sum, Matilda's narrative demonstrates how a speaker's relation to an assumed HL may develop across time. As He (2011, p. 605) argues, development in a HL is dependent on a 'continuous adaption to the unfolding, multiple activities and identities that constitute the social and communicative worlds that s/he inhabits'. In Matilda's case, her relationship to Spanish is influenced by her oral participation during family encounters, her own and her relatives' expectations and perhaps also formal language instruction in school. She constructs a dynamic relationship toward her HL and describes her competence as related to her identity and perception of self. Thus, her story is also as an example of the role language plays for inclusion in a community and about what it feels like to be an outsider. The analysis of Matilda's narratives shows how Matilda uses memories of lived experiences to describe her competence in Spanish and how it has developed throughout her life. Moreover, the analysis shows how her family members, who partly share the memory Matilda is telling about, both challenge and validate her prescribed/ascribed identity positions. In reflecting upon and evaluating personal experiences of changes in her linguistic repertoire, Matilda creates a kind of coherency by tying together different contradicting and reconciling lived experiences (Bamberg, 2010a).

## Case 2: Tania

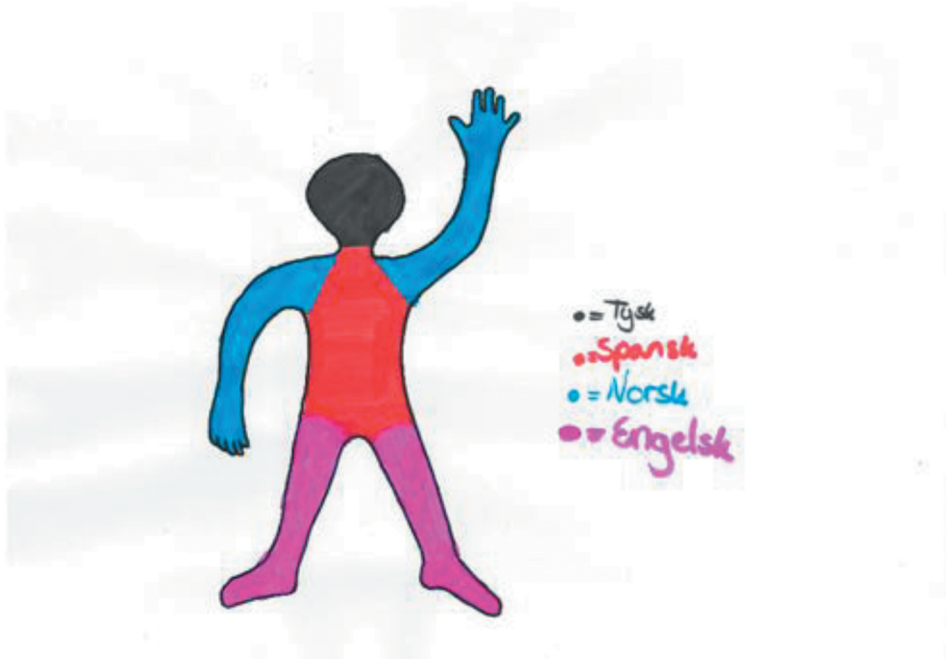


Figure 2. Tania's portrait: (German, Spanish, Norwegian, English).

In Tania's explanation of her language portrait, she describes her relationship to Spanish in the following terms:

*Excerpt 4*

1	Tania	<i>Spansk, eh ja faktisk fordi æ ganske – æ har ganske stor andel spansk</i> Spanish, eh yes actually because I have quite – I have quite a big share of Spanish.
2		<i>halvparten. (.) Det har kanskje ikke så veldig mye med språk å gjøre men liksom</i> Half (.) It might not have so much to do with language but more like
3		<i>opprinnelsen og sånn</i> the origin and such.

Tania positions Spanish as part of her repertoire, while also displaying beliefs regarding what it means to know a language. She emphasizes the relationship between language and origins, and more specifically the relation between Spanish and her mother's origins. Spanish is positioned as a symbol of origin, but not as a means of communication within the family. In contrast, German and Norwegian are construed in terms of use, where she emphasizes the instrumental and communicational sides of languages: '*Æ tenke på tysk og æ gjør ganske mange ting på tysk æ har liksom vokst opp med det språket så ja*' ("I think in German and I do quite a lot of things in German, I have like grown up with that language").

Regarding the use of Spanish, both Tania and her mother reported that they used to speak more Spanish together before, when her mother and father lived together, because Tania's German father also spoke Spanish as a second language. Both their past and current practices are results of their linguistic biographies and their transnational movements. In the interviews, Tania speaks Norwegian with dialect features that geographically indexes a Northern Norwegian belonging, which also displays parts of her linguistic biography. During the language portrait interview, Tania explained how they previously used to shift between German and Spanish, because both her parents spoke both German and Spanish. This reported practice is the motivation behind the researcher's question of whether Tania and her father ever mix languages when they speak together:

*Excerpt 5*

1	Researcher	<i>ka med blanding da – å bla – blande dokker når gang</i> what about mixing then? to mi – mi – do you ever mix
2		<i>de [forskjellige- the [different-</i>
3	Tania	<i>[nei nei det gjør vi aldri. Det e sånn (.) at eh</i> [no no we never do that. It is like this eh
4		<i>(.) pappa har ikke noe behov for å snakke spansk</i> my dad has no need to speak Spanish and I – I
5	R.	<i>nei</i> no
6	Tania	<i>og æ – æ har blitt <u>mye</u> dårligere på spansk enn æ va før</i> have become <u>much</u> worse in Spanish than I was before so
7	R.	<i>mm</i>
8	Tania	<i>så æ går – æ tar faktisk spansk eh på ungdomsskolen,</i> I go – I actually take Spanish eh at secondary school,
9	R.	<i>ja</i>
10	Tania	<i>så liksom æ forstår mye og æ skriv – æ kan faktisk skrive litt</i> so like I understand a lot and I write – I know actually how to write a little

(Continued)

(Continued).

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11	<i>grammatikken og sånn men æ k – det e</i>
	the grammar and such, but I k- it is
12	<i>litt vanskelig å, snakke og uttale ordan og sånn ja</i>
	a bit difficult to, speak and pronounce the words and such

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In line 3, Tania interrupts the researcher's question and answer quickly that they never mix. Further, Tania provides an explanatory account to why she and her father does not speak Spanish anymore. Interestingly, she does not point toward the fact that Spanish was her father's second language. Rather, she sketches two explanations for the language choices between her and her dad, the first based on necessity, and that her father does not *need* to speak Spanish and therefore they do not speak it together. Second, Tania compares her Spanish competences now and before, and states that her competence is 'a MUCH worse' than it previously was. She epistemically reinforces her statement by an exaggerated emphasis on the adverb *much*. In lines 8–10, Tania states that she takes Spanish as a subject at school, and positions herself as a learner. The epistemic amplifier 'actually' (line 8) increases the degree of certainty and authority in her statement, and suggests that Tania thinks her statement may be interpreted as surprising. The amplifier contributes to convince the audience (i.e. the researcher) of the certainty of her evaluation of her poor Spanish skills.

Tania states several times in the interview that she *understands* Spanish (Excerpt 5; line 10, Excerpt 6; line 8), and mitigates her evaluation of her Spanish being worse than it used to be. Spanish is positioned in terms of school, and she emphasizes grammatical proficiency and writing skills as something she knows (lines 10–11), while pronouncing and speaking is described as difficult (line 12). Tania displays awareness of the difference between written skills and oral skills, that is, being able to speak: By stating that she does actually understand a lot, and that she knows how to write a little, she assigns herself with receptive competence in Spanish. In pointing at these aspects of her Spanish skills, Tania demonstrates a development.

In Excerpt 6, which is from one of the follow-up conversations with Tania *and* her mother together, the researcher invited Tania to reflect upon changes in the family's language practices, which Tania evaluates and explains:

*Excerpt 6*


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1	Tania:	<i>f: nei. asså det e litt- det e egentlig litt dumt fordi vi brukte å</i>
		f: no. like it is a little- it is really a bit sad (/a shame?) because we used
2		<i>snakke spansk ganske mye (.)</i>
3	Researcher	<i>mm</i>
4	Tania	<i>men æ skjønn- æ- æ- æ- æ kjenne selv at æ bynne</i>
		to speak Spanish quite a lot. but I understand- I- I- I- I feel that I start to
5		<i>å bli litt irritert når ho mamma snakke spansk med mæ fordi da må æ liksom</i>
		become a little annoyed when my mum starts to speak Spanish with me because then
6		<i>tenke og bare 'off kordan- kordan svare man på det' eller-</i>
		I have to think and just 'uf, how how do one respond to that?'
7	R.	<i>mm</i>
8	Tania	<i>fordi æ forstår jo det ho sir, æ forstår alt ho sir</i>
		or- because I do understand what she says, I understand everything she says

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She evaluates the decreased use of Spanish as 'a bit sad' (line 1), and follows up with a more elaborated evaluative and explanatory account of her feelings related to Spanish. Her account does not refer to a specific moment, but is framed as a sequence of habitual occurrences of her getting annoyed when her mother speaks to her in Spanish. Tania attaches negative emotions to speaking Spanish at home (lines 4–5) and constructs Spanish as an inefficient means of communication



(line 6). Spanish is positioned as a communicative limitation, but Tania also emphasizes that she understands everything her mother says (line 8).

By recounting these habitual events, Tania positions herself as passive when it comes to the use of Spanish at home. This position is contrasted with her practices in the past, where Spanish seemingly was a more active part of her linguistic repertoires. Tania describes the decreased use of Spanish negatively by evaluating the change as ‘a bit sad’ and by emphasizing her lack of productive linguistic competence.

In these two excerpts, Tania reports on changes both in the family’s language practices (i.e. speaking more Spanish before) and in her own competences (i.e. she personally knew more Spanish before and now her skills are improving as a result of instructions at school). By telling about these changes and developments, Tania indirectly sketches parts of her linguistic biography: The account is produced in the local dialect,<sup>4</sup> which indexes a local belonging, while she reports on practices that index transnational mobility and changes in family constellations. Tania also points to how changing family constellations and school have impacted her language practices, and, in turn, the way Spanish is positioned as part of her repertoire: While Spanish was a productive part of the family repertoire before, it does not hold the same importance anymore. She recurrently relates the limited use and involvement in Spanish to competence.

### Case 3 – David: diverging language preferences in the family



Figure 3. David’s portrait: (Spanish) Dialect, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, English, (English) Grammar, Openness languages.

David (18) included many aspects of his linguistic repertoire and biography in his portrait. He highlighted the particular dialect from their region in his portrait as important, and described that he

<sup>4</sup>The first personal pronoun/æ/and particular intonational patterns, along with other morpho-phonological features (e.g. plural neutral definite noun forms -an,/r/-deletion in present tense of verbs, pre-proprial articles: *ho mamma*) are features that index local belonging in the northern parts of Norway.

is also open to learn new languages. He assigned great personal value to Spanish, and constructed it as symbolically value-laden:

1	<i>eh den (.) hjertet da eller a- av alle de språken som æ snakke no fordi det er (.) på</i>
2	<i>heart then or o- out of all the languages that I speak now because it is (.) in a way the måte den første språk som æ lærte eh (.) å: den har jeg mest lyst å behold.it is (.) the first language that I learnt. eh (.) and the one I want to keep the most.</i>

David metaphorically places Spanish in his heart and constructs it as important to who he is, partly by virtue of being the first language that he learnt.

When David moved from Central America, he made several changes to his linguistic repertoire, among them learning Norwegian and speaking increasingly more English on a daily basis in both school and his family. In Excerpt 7, David answers a question of whether he thinks their languages practices have changed:

*Excerpt 7*

1	David	<i>språkvis ja det har, eh, fordi vi brukte jo å snakke</i>
2		<i>language wise yes it has, eh, because we used to speak</i>
3	Res.	<i>spansk ehm (.) åsså til pappa eh uansett da han-</i>
4	David	<i>Spanish ehm (.) also to dad eh anyhow when he- ja</i>
5		<i>da han snakke engelsk (.) etterkvert i de siste t-to årene</i>
6	Res.	<i>when he spoke English (.) after a while the last t-two years he managed me- så han klarte je- seg bedre med spansk (.) eh</i>
7		<i>himself better with Spanish (.) eh mm</i>
8	Res.	<i>eh så da kunne vi snakke spansk ilag alle sammen</i>
9		<i>eh so then we all could speak Spanish all together ja</i>
10		<i>eh å nå er det på det meste del engelsk å eh det kan være litt eh (2.)</i>
11	Res.	<i>eh and now it is mostly English and (.) it eh can be a bit eh (2.) eh vanskelig når ganger å prøve å få inn ideer eller følelser med engelsk (leende)</i>
12		<i>eh hard sometimes to try include ideas or feelings with English (laughing) mm</i>
13		<i>eh men eh vi er ganske komfortabel (.) det er ikke det samme måte vi snakker me- men vi har prøvd æ trur vi har</i>
14	Res.	<i>same way we speak bu- but we have tried- I think we ja (tr: yes)</i>
15	David	<i>adapterte oss på: på systemet på måte (leend))</i>
		<i>have adapted to: the system in a way (while laughing)</i>

The interview with David was conducted in Norwegian. Similar to Tania's accounts, David also implicitly positions himself in a particular part of Norway by employing dialectal features.<sup>5</sup> A few morphological irregularities in Norwegian could also assign him a second-language speaker identity. David's account is encouraged by the researcher's explicit request to talk about changes in the family's linguistic practices (which had been a topic during the interview with David's parents). Similar to the two other adolescents, he indicates a change in his linguistic practices. He narrates his

<sup>5</sup>Personal pronouns/æ/,/ho/and the interrogative adverb/kordan/are features that index Northern Norway in David's account.

family's habitual patterns of language use (line 1–2). From line 4, David is specific in the time frame of the reported events, and narrates about how their father incorporated Spanish into his repertoire, which made it possible for them all to speak the same language together (Spanish). He contrasts these events with their present practices, where they speak mostly English. Whereas Spanish is attached with high personal value for David, English does not receive the same positive affection. He positions himself as less agentive when using English and describes it as hard to 'include in ideas and feelings with English' (line 9–10).

When accounting for the changes in the family, he explains that they 'have adapted to the system' (line 15). It remains unclear exactly what system David refers to, but one interpretation is that David refers to how this is no longer a topic of discussion in the family. The continuous use of the first-person plural (lines 12–13) positions the family as a unit who has agreed on a common linguistic practice. This way, David also assigns a collaborative agency regarding the change from Spanish to English.

Excerpt 8 below is from an interview with David conducted on a later stage in the fieldwork period, where he 'blames' his mother for the change of linguistic practices:

*Excerpt 8*

1	David	<i>ho insisterte på en måte at vi skulle snakke engelsk med henne også.</i> she insisted in a way that we were to speak English with her as well.
2	Researcher	<i>ja</i>
3	David	<i>så det er derfor at ALLE snakker engelsk hjemme.</i> so that is why everybody speaks English at home.
4	R.	<i>ja</i>
5	David	<i>eh (2.0) æ s:: så den ikke så positiv på måte fordi jeg tenk- vi- vi</i> eh (2.0) I s:: did not see it as very positive in a way because I though-
6		<i>flyttet til en land som vi kun- som det var veldig lite spansk</i> we- we moved to a country where we cou- where there was little
7		<i>som vi kunne faktisk snakke</i> Spanish that we could actually speak.
8	R.	<i>mm</i>
9	David	<i>så æ tenkte «koffer skal vi snakke engelsk til mamma samtidig som eh vi</i> so I thought 'why should we speak English to mum when we eh speak
10		<i>snakker spansk?».</i> Spanish?».
11	R.	<i>mm</i>
12	David	<i>men nå har det vært så helt naturlig at æ kan skifte</i> But now it has been so completely natural that I can switch
13		<i>mellom begge språker.</i> between both languages.
14	R.	<i>ja</i> yes
15	David	<i>eh og så noen ganger som når æ husker ikke kordan ho sier nåkka på</i> hh and sometimes when I don't remember how she says something in
16		<i>engelsk eller spansk så æ bare sier det på norsk</i> English or Norwegian then I just say it in Norwegian
17	R.	<i>ja (tr. yes) (laughing)</i>
18	David	<i>og så ho forstår helt (ler)</i> and she understands completely (laughing)

Here, the diverging expectations within the family and between the different family members are brought to the fore. David positions his mother as a responsible authority in deciding and encouraging the increased use of English at home (line 1). Thmother's decision could be interpreted as an explicit family language policy (cf. King et al., 2008). The verb 'insisting' assigns the mother with

a strong will regarding this issue. In facing the mother's decision in the narrative, David describes himself as disempowered and with lack of agency (lines 5–9). He negatively evaluates the decision of speaking English instead of Spanish, and thus contests his mother's authority position in his story. By displaying an expectation of continuing speaking Spanish with his mother and maintaining Spanish in Norway, he succeeds in presenting the maintenance of Spanish as important in the here-and-now situation.

Throughout this account, the researcher expresses convergence through continuous affirmative signals such as 'yes' and 'mm' (lines 2, 4, 8, 11, 14 and 17), which encourages David to keep on telling and approves the positions David undertakes in his narrative.

In the lines 12–18, David accentuates how speaking increasingly more English have made new kinds of linguistic practices possible where he switches between Spanish and English, and even Norwegian. He thus naturalizes this type of (trans)linguaging (lines 12, 15–17) (García & Wei, 2014; Svendsen, 2004). From positioning himself in the past as negative toward the changing practices, he readjusts this position and ascribes himself in the present with a more positive attitude. He positions himself as agentive, by presenting a solution that involves all of his linguistic resources. Similar to Matilda's narrative, David also succeeds in presenting himself and his language practices as coherent across the presented changes by way of narrating and reflecting upon how he dealt with the changes.

## Discussion and conclusion

The cases presented suggest that language competences, linguistic identities, language confidence and linguistic repertoires are dynamic entities that develop across the lifespan (cf. Busch, 2017; Pujolar & Puigdevall, 2015). These adolescents' narratives tell of experiences of changing language practices that emerge as results of, for example, language practices in the school system (Matilda and Tania) (cf. Pujolar & Puigdevall, 2015), transnational movements (Tania and David), family members' linguistic expectations (Matilda and David) or personal developments (Matilda and David).

Experiencing changes in one's linguistic repertoire and having a complex linguistic biography may have a range of practical and emotional outcomes (Busch, 2017). For example, changing family repertoires may lead to negative feelings toward languages that are no longer immediately present or available, as in Tania and David's case. Furthermore, a negative experience may also trigger language learning and engagement, as expressed by Matilda and David. Further, experiencing changes and having a complex linguistic biography may lead to a more pragmatic view involving translanguaging practices, as shown in David's case.

The findings in this article draw attention to the complex ways in which young multilinguals represent and use their linguistic repertoires, and add to the line of research that underscores the importance of considering children's and adolescents' agencies and perspectives in studies of HL maintenance and family multilingualism (e.g. Obojska, 2019a; Wilson, 2019). Research on child agency in multilingual families show that children's language choices often lead families toward language shifts in favour of the majority language (Fogle & King, 2013; Gafaranga, 2010). However, children's motivations and identifications with their HLs are not necessarily stable and fixed: As Canagarajah (2019, p. 43) argues, a pragmatic and dynamic approach to HLs have a special resonance with families in diaspora: For families with migrant backgrounds, HLs are still relevant to their daily lives, but it changes to accommodate new needs, identities and repertoires in shifting sociolinguistic contexts.

The adolescents in this study used the narratives to create coherence across, and to reflect upon, reported changes. In terms of positioning in the narratives (Bamberg, 1997; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008), the adolescents encountered challenging positions when faced with diverging views of language practices at home or expectations of language competence. By managing linguistic changes in their narratives, the adolescents also stressed their own individual agency by positioning themselves as learners or by pointing at personal and linguistic development. The sensitivity of the relationship between continuity and change in narrative analysis makes it

a particularly useful analytical tool in investigating how individuals, in this case multilingual adolescents, navigate changing sociolinguistic context and dynamic linguistic resources (Bamberg, 2010b; Hiss, 2012).

As social encounters, the narratives that emerged in the interviews were shaped by the participants and contexts (De Fina, 2009), which also influenced the available identity positions: For example, in the interview with Matilda, her whole family acted as coauthors of the story, demonstrating knowledge of Matilda's memories. The present family members both challenged and approved the positions she presented in her narrative. The different perspectives of the reported events, demonstrate that diasporic families – as any other family – do not represent a homogeneous voice. This supports the view presented by Obojska (2019a), that family interviews may create a rich interactional environment where past, present and future linguistic and social practices are discussed. The form and content of narratives, as well as available identity positions are contextually bounded. For example, the links between family, background and Spanish is partly reinforced by the researcher leading the participants to talk about particular parts of their linguistic repertoires and particular experiences. Also, there might be age differences regarding how a young teenager such as Tania (13), and older teenagers, such as Matilda (17) and David (18), construct their identities in the interview context. However, addressing all the potential contextual sources of influence is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice to say that the particular experiences expressed by the three participants may not be representative of the experiences of other multilingual adolescents.

Nevertheless, the arguments presented in this article are supported by findings in similar studies of adolescents and HL use and identity. Blackledge and Creese (2010) show how young heritage speakers in the UK use the classroom as a space where heritage values may be contested, subverted, accepted or negotiated. Similarly, while the three adolescents in this study do make connection between language, origins and identity, they also renegotiate the meaning of HL and challenge the idea of HLs as tightly connected to the home and family environment. For example, choosing Spanish as a language subject at school, like Tania and Matilda have done, enables a possibility to develop their proficiency in Spanish that may (or may not) influence HL use in other arenas. As shown by Wilson (2019) in the UK, where French is included in the mainstream school curricula, French-English bilingual children hold positive attitudes toward their HL. In Norway as in many other countries, multilingual children have relatively few possibilities of cultivating individual multilingualism in the mainstream school system (Svendsen, 2018; Svendsen & Ims, 2020). A question for future studies would be to investigate in more detail how the opportunity to develop multilingual capacities in the mainstream school system affect HL learning, identification and use. Moreover, this article focused on Latin-American descendants and their relationship with Spanish in particular. A task for future research could be to compare the experiences of adolescents with different HLs and different life trajectories, as well as investigating a broader range of their linguistic repertoire.

The empirical data in this article illuminate the complex relationship between language and identity: The three adolescents researched here report on how changes in their linguistic repertoires have produced tensions or conflictive feelings, opportunities and new, hybrid practices. Sociolinguistic research on adolescents in urban, multilingual contexts has repeatedly emphasized the sociolinguistic complexity of the adolescents' lives, contexts and consequently their linguistic repertoires (Nortier & Svendsen, 2015; Rampton, 1995). As the three cases presented in this article suggest, adolescents continuously adapt to changing sociolinguistic circumstances also within the family context. Although the current study is based on a small sample of participants, the article adds to the current scholarly discussions of HL identities (Canagarajah, 2019), by including adolescents' experiences and perspectives on family multilingualism and HLs. The article demonstrates how the participants create their own spaces for language practices, and navigate different identity positions and changing sociolinguistic circumstances. Since adolescents find themselves in a period of life where identity construction is particularly important, investigating how they make sense of changing sociolinguistic circumstances and linguistic practices provides important insights into different

experiences of family multilingualism, and into how younger generations construct (hybrid) (socio) linguistic identities.

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