Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck

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From "Muttersprachlicher Unterricht" to

Heritage Language Education

Challenges and Realities in the Bilingual Education of Spanish and

Portuguese Language Minorities in Western Austria

DIPLOMARBEIT

Supervised by

UNIV.-PROF. MAG. DR. MICHAEL SCHRATZ

Julliane de Oliveira Rüdisser

Abstract

Multilingualism and one of its main causes, namely migration along with its manifold reasons, have always been human phenomena reaching unprecedented levels in the 20th and 21st centuries. As families decide to migrate and settle in a new country a struggle for integration into the new environment and new culture runs parallel to a struggle to keep one's roots and identity in the process of adaptation.

Heritage language acquisition and maintenance becomes a crucial issue, especially when children are involved. Migrant children find themselves in a seemingly privileged position in Austria; their right to Heritage Language Education is guaranteed by state policies. Yet only few make use of this opportunity. This thesis, based on a case study of Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities in Tirol and Vorarlberg, proposes that Heritage Language Education requires more than the right to instruction and aims at exploring the status quo of heritage languages in these regions as well as presenting a model to prevent language shift.

Acknowledgements

Nelson Mandela once wrote that

> Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the
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> daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become
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> the head of the mine, that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great
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> nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates
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> one person from another (Mandela: 1994, p. 194.).

I have had the opportunity to appreciate the profound meaning of Mandela's statement in my own life. My deepest gratitude goes to my paternal grandmother to whom I dedicate this thesis, and who despite being almost illiterate in her great wisdom understood that the way out of calamity was to ensure that her children had access to education. I am eternally grateful for her efforts in passing on these values to her descendants. My gratitude goes to my parents for also recognizing the transformative power of education and for going to great lengths to enable their five children to receive the best education they could afford with their limited means.

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Table of Contents

1   Introduction

Multilingualism has always been a world phenomenon; however, in the era of globalization it has reached unparalleled levels with the vast majority of the world's population being bilingual, multilingual or in the process of becoming so. As argued by Bathia & Ritchie (2004, p.23) "far from being exceptional, as many lay people believe, bilingualism/multilingualism – which of course, goes hand-in-hand with multiculturalism in many cases – is currently the rule throughout the world and will become increasingly so in the future". Due to its various complexities multilingualism[1] has been studied through the lenses of several disciplines such as sociology, history, human geography, politics, education, linguistics and psychology (Lyon: 1996). It has many causes but perhaps one of its main roots is migration.

Migration and its manifold causes are also an ancient human phenomenon reaching unprecedented levels in the 20th and 21st centuries. Austria is not spared of this phenomenon; throughout the ages it has received different waves of migration. Immigrants who have arrived and ultimately settled here, came and still come for many reasons: they have fled conflict and poverty stricken regions and sought asylum here, they have come to aid in the reconstruction and betterment of the country as guest workers, or they have come to pursuit academic endeavours, to take on business opportunities or simply due to family reunion or marriage.

Regardless of why people migrate, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, and whether they intend or are allowed to stay permanently or not, when someone decides to migrate and settle in a new country they embark on a struggle for integration into the new environment and new

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[1] In this thesis *bilingualism* and *multilingualism* will be used as synonyms

culture and a simultaneous battle to maintain one's roots and identity in the process of adaptation. This struggle may be particularly challenging when it takes place in an angst filled society as under these circumstances parents and indeed ethnolinguistic communities often find themselves in the awkward position of having to "constantly justify themselves, in the face of a wall of doubt and disbelief, for simply doing what is normal all over the world, namely making sure that their children are following in the ethnolinguistic and ethnocultural footsteps of their parents and grandparents" (Fishman 2004, p. 414).

Particularly when children are involved, heritage language transmission, acquisition and maintenance become crucial issues. If conditions are favourable, this task will be challenging but possible. Where the contrary is the case language shift will likely occur as individuals, and indeed their children, make an effort to adapt to mainstream society. It takes only two generations to extinguish proficiency in the minority language in such a context but as argued by Fishman (2004, p. 408) it is "by no means time enough to wipe out the cultural memories and part identities, nor to counteract the grievances derived from discrimination, marginalization and denials of cultural democracy aspirations." It is important to highlight that language shift is hardly ever voluntarily, it happens mostly when individuals feel pressurised by mainstream society to abandon their heritage language and opt for the majority language instead.

A society that acknowledges the benefits of multilingualism cannot afford language shift and its implication because this implies not only a violation of human rights but, clearly, a waste of valuable resources in an increasingly multilingual and multicultural world. Immigrants have a valuable contribution to make towards fostering multilingualism, nevertheless, their socio-economic situation is often such that "They are too weak and too situationally disadvantaged to attain this goal by themselves" Fishman (2004, p. 417). Thus, following Fishman's argument that heritage language transmission and maintenance efforts cannot and

should not be exclusively intergenerational; they should instead be a matter of national interest because

> It is just as scandalous and injurious to waste "native" language resources as to waste our air, water, mineral, animal and various non-linguistic human resources. How long must languages and cultures be trivialized if they are learned at home, in infancy and childhood, and only be respected if they are acquired later, during adulthood, when they are usually learned less well and at much greater cost in competence, time and money? (p. 417)

However, acknowledging the importance and value of multilingualism alone is not sufficient; society needs to provide whatever is necessary for multilingualism to exist and prosper. In this thesis it will be proposed that heritage language acquisition, education, revitalization and maintenance are issues that go hand in hand with migration and need to be discussed seriously wherever migration is present. In particular in Austria, where despite the many migration waves throughout recent decades, the national mind-set still fails to identify Austria as a migration country. As a result, many discussions related to minority languages are turned into matters of dispute over which languages are legitimate, and over affiliation; "Who belongs to us? […] who are we? Are we also those who speak primarily Russian? Are we also those who speak a kind of German-Turkish?" (Translated from Quehl & Mecheril 2010, 5-6).[2]

This thesis claims that in order to avoid this kind of conflict and dispute, heritage language acquisition and maintenance need to be perceived as a human right, as a great potential for society and individuals and, thus, it must be handled as a complex phenomenon. It is well reported that the benefits of bilingualism/multilingualism are many, and of great benefits are

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[2] All quotes from sources that have been originally published in German have been translated for this thesis by Julliane de Oliveira Rüdisser

particularly those of cognitive nature that depend heavily on the proficiency levels of both languages. Thus, any effort in supporting the full development of a heritage languages needs to see and handle any heritage language not only as a language of the past, but also as a language of the here-and-now, providing heritage learners with "life experiences and performances that will enable them to practice their bilingualism in a future global world" (Garcia et al. 2013, p. 10). Moreover, since the acquisition of further languages is impaired and indeed the overall academic performance is affected due to lack of full acquisition of the heritage language, a legitimization instead of a repressive approach is called for concerning heritage language acquisition, revitalization, maintenance and Heritage Language Education as a whole.

Children who have a migration background find themselves, at least in theory, in a privileged position in Austria; their right to formal Heritage Language Education is guaranteed by rather progressive state policies that have existed for well over three decades. Yet only a minority of heritage language owners make use of this opportunity. This thesis describes and discusses that there are many reasons that explain why so few make use of this offer; however, it seems that less visible minorities and less commonly spoken languages are particularly likely to be left out of national efforts to promote Heritage Language Education.

It will be proposed here that Heritage Language Education requires more than the right to instructions. A holistic model that has considered and incorporated many of the complexities in bilingual education will be presented. This model calls for multiple and mutual efforts on the part of families, the educational system and ultimately the ethnolinguistic community in order to prevent language shift and to promote balanced bilingualism. This holistic model will be applied to two overlooked language minorities, namely Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities in Tirol and Vorarlberg. The results of this case study will serve as a basis of exploration of the status quo of Heritage Language Education in the region.

In order to do so, some definitions regarding bilingualism, language acquisition, heritage language as opposed to mother tongue and foreign language will be explored in chapter two. Additionally, Heritage Language Education as an emerging field of research, its impact worldwide as well as its status in Austria will be analysed and discussed in detail.

In chapter three the focus will turn to answers to the question "Why is it important to maintain a language?" A thorough revision of the literature in this respect will be presented and at the core of the discussion will be the exploration of the many advantages of bilingualism. These can be divided into three main types, namely: cognitive, socio-emotional and economic benefits.

Based on extensive research of literature, three different pillars of the holistic model proposed for combating language shift and promoting balanced bilingualism will be proposed in chapter four. Their respective functions and purposes will be presented and discussed in detail.

In chapter five a case study conducted with Portuguese and Spanish speaking minorities in Tirol and Vorarlberg will be presented. The results will be discussed with the aim of analysing to what extent the preconditions discussed in the previous chapters are existent, and by doing so, of examining if language shift is already happening and to what degree. The examples provided in this chapter will hopefully shed light on the challenges faced by less visible ethnolinguistic minorities in Austria.

Finally, different Austrian media reports concerning migration and the use of heritage languages will be discussed with the aim of achieving a better understanding in regards to general attitudes towards heritage languages and the situation of minorities and their respective languages. As Baker (2011, p. 374) has argued:

Bilingualism is not only studied linguistically, psychologically and sociologically, it is also studied in relationship to power and political systems in society […] bilingualism and bilingual education, whatever form they take, cannot be properly understood unless connected to ideologies and politics in society. The activity of a bilingual classroom, and decisions about how to teach minority language children, are not based purely on educational preferences. Rather, calls for and against bilingual education are surrounded and underpinned by basic beliefs about minority languages and cultures, linguistic and cultural diversity, immigration and immigrants, equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes, empowerment, affirmative action, the rights of individuals and the rights of language minority groups, assimilation and integration, desegregation and discrimination, pluralism and multiculturalism, diversity and discord, equality of recognition for minority groups, social division and social cohesion.

This thesis will hopefully shed light on some challenges faced by ethnolinguistic minorities in Austria and will ideally contribute to raising awareness of the issue, and thereby hopefully aiding in decision-making with regard to language policies in the future.

2   Background

2.1   Bilingual Education and its Nuances

Heritage Language Education (henceforth referred to as HLE) is a form of bilingual education. In order to better comprehend bilingualism and bilingual education in its full complexity, it is important to clarify some of its related terminology. While it is clear that different authors and researchers have and use their own definitions, for the purpose of this thesis Baker's (2011) terminologies and definitions concerning bilingualism will be mostly used here.

Baker (2011) has reviewed the literature on bilingualism extensively and he has argued that the ownership of two or more languages is a complex phenomenon. A person may own and use two or more languages on a regular basis but his or her competence in one of these languages may be restricted. Additionally, he or she may use one of his or her owned language in conversation and the other for the purpose of reading and writing. Baker differentiates between *passive bilinguals* as those individuals who have receptive skills, that is, understanding when spoken to or when listening and when reading, and *active bilinguals* as those who are able to speak and write or, in other words, have productive skills in both languages.

 Additionally, the term used to refer to bilinguals who can read and write in both languages is *biliterate*. In contrast, *equilingual, ambilingual* or as more commonly used *balanced bilingual*, is the individual who uses both languages in different situations and masters all four skills (productive or receptive) equally well. While some scholars argue that *balanced bilingualism* is a problematic term, and some even claim that it is a myth or at least an idealized concept, others argue that it is an important concept when considering the advantages of bilingualism, especially those of cognitive nature (Baker: 2011).

Furthermore, the *domain* or context in which each language is acquired and used may vary. The bilingual person may use one language in the home domain and the other in a school or in a work setting. He or she may use each language for different purposes, for instance one of his or her languages may be used mostly for professional or educational related purposes, whereas the other language may be used for communication with family and relatives, for having access to relevant information or simply for leisure (Baker: 2011).

With regard to the stage of acquisition, bilingualism can occur *simultaneously* (two languages acquired from birth) or *consecutively* (in this case a second language is learnt after around three years of age). In an ideal scenario, bilinguals are able to use both languages equally well in all situations. However, in most cases one language tends to be dominant, especially in a set up where the dominant language is the language of a vast majority (Baker: 2011) and opportunities to fully acquire and use the other language are scarce.

Language shift is a common phenomenon that has both individual and societal reasons. It takes place within immigrant communities when individuals come in contact with and use the dominant language more and more often (especially when schooling in the dominant language begins) until the minority language becomes dormant or inactive (O'Grady et al. 2011, p. 673). It may be a result of planned government policy or it may happen in an unconscious and unplanned manner but it is hardly ever voluntary. Language shift occurs when individuals are pressurized to abandon their heritage language or when they perceive the use of their heritage language as a disadvantage as it is often the case in contexts where intolerance towards differences prevails. Additionally, language shift also happens when the level of proficiency in the heritage language is low, such as is the case of some bilinguals who acquire both languages from birth but never fully develop their heritage language. Lewis (2013, p. 673) argues that one potential response to language shift is to engage in language maintenance which he defines as "the effort to arrest and reverse the process of language

shift: an effort is made to ensure that a vulnerable language does not decline and, eventually disappear; but rather that it continues to be spoken by a sustainable community of people". In this sense efforts that foster *balanced bilingualism* may counteract and even reverse language shift.

When it comes to the question of language dominance, it is important to highlight that this is neither a static nor an irreversible situation; the language that is less used today may become the dominant language tomorrow as personal and social circumstances change. Moreover, it will be argued here that in the case of heritage language speakers (a type of bilingual) or learners, balanced bilingualism under certain conditions is not only a desirable but also an achievable goal. This perspective will be discussed with more depth later on.

Since culture is always at the core of language, the bilingual individual may be *bicultural* or have *bicultural competence*, that is, he or she will have knowledge from both languages´ cultures and, he or she will have feelings and attitudes towards those two cultures. In this case, he or she will behave in ways that are culturally, guided by his or her awareness and empathy. When individuals migrate and make strenuous efforts to learn the language of the host country and adapt to the host culture, a process of *assimilation* and *acculturation* may occur. It is noteworthy that some bilinguals may have a high proficiency in both languages and still think and act in a *monocultural* way (Baker: 2011).

One may ask whether the term *bilingual* is still a suitable term in a world that is becoming increasingly *multilingual.* The argument here is that especially in the case of *bilingualism* that is concomitant with *heritage language* (henceforth referred to as HL), the term *bilingualism* is still useful as it effectively describes the state of duality heritage language speakers or owners live in, meandering between both languages and cultures. Even when more languages are part

of the equation for some individuals, still the intensity in which he or she lives his or her L1 (language one) and L2 (language two) will often be indisputable.

2.2 Mother Tongue versus Heritage Language

As already mentioned, a term that has been used concomitantly with *bilingual* is the term *heritage language speaker* or *heritage language user*. However, the *heritage language speaker* or learner is a special kind of *bilingual*. It is important to highlight that *Heritage Language Education* programs are still referred to in Austria as *mother tongue instruction* and those who make use of this offer are referred to as *mother tongue learners* or s*peakers*. Nevertheless, here it will be argued that *mother tongue* is an unsuitable denomination for a number of reasons: the chief reason being that literally speaking for many learners it is not the mother tongue, but perhaps the father tongue or the language of his or her ancestors. Even when the language is indeed spoken by the individual's mother, due to various reasons she may not always choose to or she might simply not be in a position that enables her to transmit her L1 to her children. Doer & Lee (2013, p. 31) highlight this view and offer a useful insight as to why the term is so problematic.

> While the term "mother tongue" reflects a European cultural convention, it is inaccurate in some cases because one might use the language of one's father as one first language. Moreover, the definition of "mother tongue" is complex, due to the "multilingual" reality in most places around the world […] there are four possible definitions of "mother tongue": (1) The language(s) one learns first; (2) The language(s) one knows best; (3) The language(s) one uses most; (4) The language(s) one identifies with. In other words, one might have different languages as "mother tongues", depending on which definition is used. The second and third definitions – competence and function, respectively – fail to consider one might have poor proficiency in the language one learned first.

In order to better understand why "mother tongue" is such a problematic term it is helpful to think of a concrete situation. Consider a person who, for instance, may have been born to an Austrian father and a Brazilian mother, and therefore, have both an Austrian and a Brazilian background. This individual may have been initially brought up bilingually in German and Portuguese but somewhere along the process of acquisition his or her mother stopped using Portuguese (due to personal or social reasons). As a result, the process of acquiring Portuguese was never completed and this individual has currently no level of proficiency in Portuguese. For this individual, Portuguese is not the language he or she learned first, it was learned parallel to German; therefore it is not a mother tongue according to the first definition. Secondly, since he or she no longer uses Portuguese, it is unlikely that it is the language he or she best knows; thus the second definition does not apply to this individual. Additionally, he or she no longer uses the language, so the third definition is also inapplicable here. Finally, while he or she may still identify with the Brazilian culture and language, his or her level of proficiency in Portuguese is still poor. Does that necessarily imply that Portuguese is his or her mother tongue?

Therefore, it is argued here that the term *mother tongue* does not translate the complexity of the realities of such individuals. A lot more is required than a single person being responsible for transmitting his or her native language to a child in order for the child to become a competent bilingual. Often, due to lack of support, knowledge and other prerequisites, a parent may be lost in the task, while others give up before even trying. Consequently *language shift* occurs as "certain languages may experience decline, as their speakers adopt a new tongue as their main medium of communication in key social domains, or decide not to transfer their traditional language to their descendants. Equally, other languages may increase in size and status" (Lewis: 2013, p. 672). Therefore in a narrow sense and according to Polinsky & Kagan (in Carreira & Kagan: 2011, p. 41) the HL may be the "first in the order of

acquisition but was not completely acquired because of the individuals switch to another dominant language."

On the other hand and in a broad sense, it is only in the third or fourth generation that an individual might be in a position to choose or simply have the opportunity for the first time to appropriate his or her HL, reflecting a breach in the passing down of the language in childhood, or simply as a result of individual choices. Some individuals may have started with the acquisition of the HL in early childhood but it may have been interrupted for various reasons, and these individuals might take on the task of revitalizing their HL at a later stage. As Polinsky & Kagan (in Carreira & Kagan: 2011, p. 41) argue "the person may have an "ethnic" or cultural interest in the language but no ability to speak or comprehend it." Nevertheless, even if there has been an interruption the process of acquisition or even if acquisition has never taken place, these individuals are and will always be entitled to their heritage language and the culture associated with this particular language. In this respect the term *heritage language* seems to, therefore, be a better choice than "mother tongue" as it is "generally more attuned to the socio-political status of a given language" (Leeman: 2015, p. 103).

HL is politically speaking a term of major importance because, on the one hand it denotes a sense of right or entitlement not only to the language, but to the cultural wealth associated with language, and as a result, the right to the cultural identity that is also at stake. By contrast, it also denotes a sense of duty in regard to all those involved in a child's upbringing and education (parents, community and state); the duty to ensure that all is done to promote and support the full acquisition and development of a child's heritage language and identity. The term is particularly useful when awareness concerning the direct connection between right and duty is not present on a political, academic and social level. Its conscious use empowers individuals and minorities to appropriate that which is righteously theirs by birth,

namely their language, their values and traditions. In the following section the main characteristics of the HL owner or learner, as opposed to those of the foreign language learner will be presented.

2.3   The Heritage Language Learner and the Foreign Language Learner

Wiley (in Carreira & Kagan: 2011, p. 41) argues that it is important to specify the HL learner because

> The labels and definitions that we apply to heritage language learners are important, because they help to shape the status of the learners and the languages they are learning. Deciding on what types of learners should be included under the heritage language label raises a number of issues related to identity and inclusion and exclusion […] some learners, with a desire to establish a connection with a past language, might not be speakers of that language yet.

Thus, for the sake of clarity it is useful to try to define who the HL speakers or learners are. Since they are such a heterogeneous group it is challenging to define who they are without excluding a language or an individual. However, in general terms "heritage language learners are the children of families who speak an ethnolinguistically minority language" (Montrul: 2010, p. 3), the term HL can also be used in contexts of multinational or multi-ethnic homes where both the majority and a minority language are used.

In some cases the HL owner speaks or just understands his or her HL and is, at least up to some degree, bilingual in the majority language and his or her HL. It is important to highlight that the level of language proficiency may vary greatly from individual to individual. Some may excel in the majority language and possess only rudimentary knowledge and ability in the HL. Others may have completed the process of acquisition in the HL and have very basic knowledge in the majority language. There are also those who have a high level of proficiency in both HL and majority language and are therefore, balanced bilinguals.

Moreover, the field of HLE has many similarities to that of foreign language education. In particular, when considering designing a course for HL learners it is not only helpful to differentiate them from the native speaker, but also to contrast HL learners to foreign language learners. Both HLE and foreign language instruction take place in a setting where the target language is neither the official nor the majority language. However, the HL learner differs from the foreign language leaner in terms of how acquisition occurs. In the case of foreign language acquisition, this usually takes place in a structured setting, the classroom, whereas the HL acquisition begins in a naturalistic setting, the home (Kagan & Dillon: 2008). Additionally, in order for the HL to blossom it needs the support of a structured setting, namely formal education.

Moreover, the motivation behind learning a foreign language and an HL may differ. Whereas an individual may learn a foreign language for academic, professional or leisure purposes, the main motivation behind learning an HL are usually socio-emotional related, that is, motivations often have to do with issues of identity and are often related to the individual wanting to find some connection with his or her roots. This is argued by Edwards (2004), who reminds us that besides its utilitarian and unemotional instrumentality we need to perceive the issue of belonging as the core of bilingualism. Montrul (2010, pp. 4-5) in contrast argues that heritage speakers are a particular case of child bilingualism because

> The home or family language is a minority language, not all heritage language children have access to education in their heritage language. Consequently, the vast majority of adult heritage speakers typically have very strong command of the majority language, while proficiency and literacy in the family language varies considerably. Although one can certainly find some heritage speakers with very advanced or even nativelike proficiency in the two languages (e.g., some Spanish heritage speakers studied by Montrul, 2006), for most heritage speakers, the home language is the weaker language. Proficiency in the weaker language can range from mere receptive skills (most often listening) to intermediate and advanced oral and

written skills, depending on the language, the community, and a host of other sociolinguistic circumstances.

Especially when formal HLE is not available, HL speakers generally lack formal grammatical terminology or metalinguistic distinctions. As a result, HL speakers produce a particular kind of language that may be characterized according to Marks (2011, p. 182) as

> Not necessarily a prestigious variety of the heritage language. For example, a heritage Spanish speaker would most likely say aplicar para (un puesto) rather than the normative, solicitar (un puesto). As HLSs are not typically exposed to the skills of reading and writing during their formal education, they tend to write their heritage language phonetically. However, they are usually fluent in interacting and oral comprehension, quite the opposite of F/SLLs. HLSs are also aware of the sociolinguistic norms in their respective heritage language, and know how to use speech appropriately. Regarding terms of address, for instance, HSSs would use second-person pronouns (i.e., the formal usted as opposed to the informal tú) appropriately. The pronunciation of HLSs is native or native-like, and their productive lexical knowledge is considerably more extensive in areas such as daily activities, household objects, and culturally relevant events (e.g., weddings, birthday celebrations, funerals, etc.) rather than in academic matters.

Concerning the USA, Montrul (2010) points out that most heritage children are educated in the majority language, in this case English, but that instruction in the HL is available for some children depending on the language, the community and the amount of effort the family makes in raising the child in the HL. Montrul (2010) highlights how some migrant communities are very proactive in promoting their language and culture via community organized schools, in particular those communities of East Asian descent. In the following section the origins and the development of HLE will be presented.

2.4 Heritage Language Education

Lewis (2013, p. 673) argues that until the twentieth century the idea of reversing language shift through language maintenance was considered irrational because "Securing development and advancement was the priority, and it was assumed that such aims could be achieved only through the medium of dominant state-wide languages." After the second half of the twentieth century this notion was challenged and, up to a certain point, changed as a result of minorities organizing themselves politically, paving the way to the development of HLE as argued by Valdez (2001, p. 1)

> New awareness of language rights and new efforts to right old wrongs have prompted educators around the world to recognize the importance of ethnic and heritage languages. In some countries, this recognition has led to policies that support the teaching of these languages as school subjects to learners with a home background in these languages and as foreign languages to students with no background in them. Supporters of these policies believe that they give these languages both legitimacy and attention.

The term *heritage language* was coined in Canada in the late seventies by Jim Cummins. It intersects with many disciplines: sociolinguistics, education, sociology, political sciences, and anthropology, to name a few. It is a relevant field of study in any context where migration takes place and as Montrul (2010, p. 4) claims, it is a field that:

> Emerged out of necessity, driven primarily by demographic changes, heritage language education has been strongly concerned with issues of cultural identity (i.e., who exactly are heritage speakers?) as well as pedagogical and practical questions, including what to teach and how to best instruct heritage language learners so that their personal, cultural, and linguistic needs can be properly met.

Even though the term *heritage language* per se has not yet found its way to the Austrian academic or political scenario (here the used term is *Muttersprachlicher Unterricht* or mother tongue tuition), it is the term used around the world and it "goes hand in hand with the emergence of a new label and category "heritage learner" […] this construct has been

supported by tremendous growth of heritage language education, the adoption of the term in academic and policy discourse" (Leeman: 2015, p. 103).

Heritage language is particularly used in the USA where in the late nineties interest in bilingualism and the preservation of all spoken languages was just reaching its prime with the first conference being held dedicated to HL teaching. The conference report called for "multidisciplinary research with a focus on the heritage speaker; the family and the community; language specific issues; educational policies; programmatic priorities and assessment" (Kagan & Dillon: 2008, p. 145). Three years later the second conference was held aiming at developing

> Public awareness of the economic, personal, and social benefits of proficiency in heritage language and promote the inclusion of heritage language issues in the national dialogue; to shape a national heritage language policy and share information on best practices; to develop collaboration among all constituent groups; and to devise a plan for moving from rhetoric to action (Kagan & Dillon: 2008, p. 145).

Since then a number of publications dealing with HLE have appeared, not only in the USA but throughout the world. In 2003 the UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Center for World Languages and the UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching started a joint project, namely the *Heritage Language Journal* (HLJ), a pioneer and thus far, only online journal dedicated to publishing material related to the heritage language field of research (Kagan & Dillon: 2008).

Leeman (2015) presents the main factors that have contributed to the rise in interest in the field of HLE, in particular in the USA. Firstly, the growth of immigration, consequently leading to a growth in the number of speakers of various languages other than the language of the host society, and the interest of second-generation Americans in the maintenance and development of their HL. Secondly, despite relatively strong societal pressure on migrant

populations to assimilate to the host society, mainstream language and culture, there has also been an increased recognition of the linguistic rights of minorities. Thirdly, after the Golf War there was suddenly an awareness that any efforts made by the USA in the region were jeopardized by the lack of language and cultural understanding on the part of the individuals involved in the process. This awareness resulted in federal interest and initiatives to promote proficiency in less commonly taught languages, making it a matter of national security and interest.

In the following section the current state of HLE in Austria will be presented and discussed.

2.5   Heritage Language Education in Austria

Despite growing worldwide interest and investment in HLE as a field of research, it has at least as far as the terminology goes, hardly made any impact in the Austrian academic context or in German speaking countries generally for that matter. Nevertheless, under certain conditions (which shall be specified in chapter five) HLE is a right any school aged child with a migrant background is entitled to in Austria, regardless whether the child belongs to a state recognized minority (as it is the case for Croatian, Slovenian, Hungarian, Czech and Slovak autochthonous minorities)[3] or not. Progressive language policies that guarantee this right have existed as early as the seventies and since the nineties the state funded and organized *Muttersprachlicher Unterricht*[4] (mother tongue tuition) has been anchored in the national curriculum for primary schools; in 2000/1 it found its place in the national curriculum for middle schools and, finally, in 2005 for high schools.

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[3] http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/european-foreign-policy/human-rights/priorities-of-austrian-human-rights-policy/rights-of-minorities/

[4] http://www.schule-mehrsprachig.at/fileadmin/schule_mehrsprachig/redaktion/Hintergrundinfo/info1-14-15.pdf

According to statistics from the Austrian Ministry of Education, for the years 2012/13 twenty percent of all students attending the Austrian school system, that is a total of 222.904 students, did not have German as a L1 as demonstrated in figure 1:

SchülerInnen mit anderen Erstsprachen als Deutsch in absoluten Zahlen							
ÖSTERREICH	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Volksschulen (inkl. Vorschule)	70.433	71.992	74.141	76.325	78.505	81.255	84.061
darunter Vorschulstufen	2.583	2.801	3.221	3.623	3.816	4.227	4.287
Hauptschulen	48.057	48.956	48.683	45.363	40.603	35.493	27.805
Neue Mittelschulen [1]	---	---	---	---	---	---	23.519
Sonderschulen	3.492	3.576	3.656	3.677	3.767	4.042	4.163
Polytechnische Schulen	4.351	4.403	4.484	4.483	4.641	4.603	4.737
Allgemein bildende Pflichtschulen	126.333	128.927	130.964	129.848	127.516	125.393	144.285
Modellversuch „Neue Mittelschule"	---	---	832	4.631	9.511	15.532	---
AHS-Unterstufe	14.391	15.596	16.503	17.383	17.657	17.719	18.899
AHS-Oberstufe	9.382	10.006	10.676	11.188	11.949	12.901	13.912
Allgemein bildende höhere Schulen	23.773	25.602	27.179	28.571	29.606	30.620	32.811
Berufsbildende Pflichtschulen	10.593	11.012	11.510	12.334	12.934	14.255	15.251
Berufsbildende mittlere Schulen	8.078	8.361	8.611	9.388	9.673	9.912	10.102
Berufsbildende höhere Schulen	13.240	14.226	14.956	16.154	17.423	18.687	20.046
Lehrerbildende höhere Schulen	237	252	266	349	391	395	409
Berufsbildende Schulen	32.148	33.851	35.343	38.225	40.421	43.249	45.808
alle Schulen [2]	182.254	188.380	194.318	201.275	207.054	214.794	222.904

[1] vgl. Vorbemerkung, Punkt 8
[2] ohne Bundesanstalten für Leibeserziehung und ohne Schulen mit eigenem Organisationsstatut

Figure 1: Students with other L1 than German in absolute numbers[5]

Garcia et al. (2013, p. 12) have highlighted the problematic nature of language census, stating that "some of these issues are associated with the fact that data collection is based on self-report. Thus, data is likely to reflect ideology or perception, rather than actual language use of proficiency." In this sense, the actual number of speakers of other languages than German in the Austrian school system may in fact be higher, as parents are often not directly asked about and do not always actively inform the school authorities about the linguistic background of their children. When it is not obvious that a child has another linguistic background besides the majority language, it is almost impossible to carry out an accurate census.

The same ministry claims that the *Muttersprachlicher Unterricht* is a matter of central concern for educational politics and that its execution should be categorically enabled as long

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[5] http://www.schule-mehrsprachig.at/fileadmin/schule_mehrsprachig/redaktion/Hintergrundinfo/info2-13-14.pdf

as the pre-established minimum amount of students is pre-existent.[6] And yet statistics from 2012/13 shows that only 32.757 students took part in the so called *Muttersprachlichee Unterricht* (mother tongue instruction), the Austrian version of the HL maintenance program, as seen in the figure 2:

Tabelle 6a: Muttersprachliche LehrerInnen, SchülerInnen und Unterrichtsstunden nach Sprachen im Schuljahr 2012/13: in absoluten Zahlen

	LehrerInnen	Unterrichtsstunden			SchülerInnen
		Kurs	Team	gesamt	
Albanisch	25	372	42	414	2.379
Arabisch	11	144	48	192	1.075
BKS	147	1.207	1.651	2.858	10.778
Bulgarisch	3	28		28	168
Chinesisch	3	18		18	77
Dari	1	18		18	101
Französisch	2	8		8	46
Italienisch	1	2		2	8
Kurdisch/Kurmanci	3	15	3	18	64
Kurdisch/Zazaki	2	6		6	36
Pashto	1	10		10	41
Persisch	4	53	8	61	392
Polnisch	8	126	2	128	851
Portugiesisch	3	14	2	16	94
Romanes	3	29	29	58	128
Rumänisch	3	44		44	239
Russisch	9	64		64	336
Slowakisch	5	24	5	29	152
Slowenisch	2	8		8	23
Somali	1	6		6	32
Spanisch	6	19	2	21	129
Tschechisch	3	12	12	24	67
Tschetschenisch	6	46	37	83	428
Türkisch	154	1.602	1.447	3.049	14.911
Ungarisch	9	46		46	202
gesamt	**415**	**3.921**	**3.288**	**7.209**	**32.757**

Figure 2: Absolute numbers of HLs, HL teachers and students in the years 2012/13.[7]

[6] https://www.bmbf.gv.at/ministerium/rs/2004_08.html

[7] http://www.schule-mehrsprachig.at/fileadmin/schule_mehrsprachig/redaktion/Hintergrundinfo/info5-13-14.pdf

One could ask why only a small portion of HL owners take part in this program. The answer is surely not very straight forward, but one possible explanation is, according to a report produced recently by the Eurydice (Education Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency) for the European Commission in Austria (p. 27) [8] that "in practice, mother tongue tuition is often not viewed as a priority by schools." Consequently, despite the existence of progressive language policies their execution is still weak. Many migrant communities living in Austria are not actively informed about the existence of such instruction and so are not aware of the opportunities it offers. By contrast, some families may be well aware of the offer, but may not recognize the value and importance of formal education in the HL. Additionally, some families may fear their children might be marginalized by their peers or the system if they take part in such programs, turning it down to prevent their children from suffering any disadvantage in the process.

Other issues related to the organization of such programs may also be at stake. It is often a challenge to find the right amount of children in the same area, this may be easier in a big city such as Vienna where there is a larger concentration of migrants, but in smaller cities it may be harder due to the smaller concentration of people belonging to the same ethnolinguistic minority. Finding suitable professionals to work in this context may be also difficult, especially in the case of less commonly spoken languages. Additionally, teachers working in this particular setting will be faced with the task of teaching children of various ages and linguistic backgrounds all at once. Keeping up with their needs and interests will be a difficult challenge that will likely affect retention rates. Whatever the reasons may be, the fact remains that only a minority of school children with a migrant background receive state-organized HLE in Austria.

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[8] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/101EN.pdf

It is important to note that some communities take matters into their own hands and organize and finance their own educational activities in order to promote their HL while others, such as the Brazilian community in Vorarlberg (one of the major migrant groups in that region) and Tirol are less visible and less pro-active, resulting in limited language access and hardly any formal education in the HL for the children involved. As a result, this may lead to incomplete patterns of acquisition, language attrition, a lack of formal registers and in some extreme cases it may even lead to language loss as has been noted by Montrul (2010).

The question needs to be posed as to why it is advisable to promote policies that foster HL development and maintenance. First, to deny a child the chance to develop his or her HL to its full potential is to ignore the importance of the HL in his or her education and academic development. Moreover, beyond the idea that HLE should be seen as a right, a major issue that occurs in the absence of HLE is, as previously mentioned, language shift. Nevertheless, language shift does need not occur, in particular if balanced bilingualism is perceived and handled as a desirable and, as a result, measures are taken to ensure that conditions are met that enable this goal to be achieved. Lastly, bilingualism in an increasingly globalized world must be perceived as an asset to any society where it takes place instead of being perceived as a problem to be solved. Based on an extensive body of research, there is enough evidence pointing out to the fact that being a bilingual, particularly if this bilingualism is balanced, brings many advantages both on a societal (macro) and individual (micro) level. These advantages will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

3   Advantages of Multilingual Individuals

3.1   Perceptions

A powerful tool in preventing and reversing language shift is the awareness that bilingualism or multilingualism has many advantages on an individual and on a societal level. Those who are aware of these advantages will likely undertake whatever is in their power in order to strengthen balanced bilingualism, and by doing so; language shift may be prevented or reversed.

There was a time when bilingualism was viewed rather negatively; there was a well-spread notion that bilingualism had detrimental effects on children's development and intelligence. Baker notes how some professionals such as teachers, doctor, speech therapists, school psychologists, social workers, among others, warned parents against raising a child bilingually predicting that problems such as "burden on the brain, mental confusion, slowing down of the acquisition of the majority language, identity conflicts, split loyalties, alienation and even schizophrenia" (Baker: 2011, p. 139) could occur in a bilingual child. Bourgogne (2013, p. 23) asserts that these negative notions concerning bilingualism were largely based on poorly-designed tests that "didn't compare like with like, and many of the results of these early studies had more to do with social, rather than language, differences."

To some extent some professionals unfortunately still give this kind of advice nowadays, but in general the views and attitudes towards bilingualism, especially in the face of an immense body of research that points to the contrary, have become more positive as of late. There seem to be many advantages concerning bilingualism: on a micro level these advantages concern the bilingual individual and, on a macro level, society as a whole may profit from bilingualism. According to Kouritzin (2000) the benefits of bilingualism can be divided into

three groups: cognitive, socio-emotional and economic all of which shall be discussed in more detail in the next section.

3.2 Cognitive Benefits

There seem to be a number of cognitive benefits related to leading a life in two or more languages, provided that a certain level of proficiency in both languages is reached. First, in comparison to monolinguals, bilinguals have an enhanced *metalinguistic awareness*, that is, an understanding about the symbolic nature of language. A bilingual child may realize earlier than a monolingual child that the same object or idea can be described with different words. He or she may also grasp (consciously or not) earlier than monolinguals that by changing word order, a verb tense, or punctuation can alter the meaning of a phrase entirely. This kind of knowledge is the foundation of literacy, and bilingual child seems to be ready to read and write earlier than monolinguals (Bourgogne: 2013).

Additionally, according to Bialystok (2011), a Canadian cognitive neuroscientist who has done a vast amount of research on the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, bilingual children develop what Bialystok calls an enhanced *executive control system* which means the ability to manage complex cognitive processes such as problem-solving, memory and thought. This occurs because even when a child is apparently only using one of his or her languages, the other language is nevertheless, still active. He or she will need to select answers and solutions to different situations in his or her language of choice without allowing the other language to disturb in the process. The *executive control system*'s task is to resolve competition and focus attention. This system is like a muscle, the more it is exercised the stronger it will become, and bilingual children are in a privileged position in this sense because they use this system at all times. According to Bialystok (2011, p. 466)

An important outcome of bilingualism may be in managing executive control components to address complex goals. Because most real-life tasks are integrative and based on networks of control, the effect of bilingualism on cognitive performance during childhood may be more powerful than previously believed.

Moreover, when faced with tasks that demand sustained attention, or even when having to change tasks in an effective manner, or where creative and divergent thinking are needed, and when it comes to learning further languages, bilinguals seem to perform better academically than monolinguals (Jessner: 2008).

However, one of the perhaps most striking cognitive benefits of bilingualism is the fact that speaking two or more languages throughout a lifetime prevents cognitive decline and rewires the brain in such a positive manner that it may prevent or at least delay the symptoms of Alzheimer's. This is due to the fact that, as already discussed; bilinguals have a protected and enhanced *executive control system.* Therefore, even in cases when the bilingual individual is diagnosed with Alzheimer, this enhanced *executive control system* may be responsible for the delay in the onset of symptoms of Alzheimer's as it seems to protect a range of neuronal, glial and synaptic functions (Gold: 2015). In other words, being bilingual may be the best medicine for preventing or, at least delaying dementia.

3.3   Socio-emotional Advantages

Besides the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, there are also socio and emotional advantages related to being bilingual. When a child is able to speak two languages, in particular if one of these languages is a heritage language, he or she will be able to communicate with the parent who is a native of this HL. As a result the child's identity is strengthened, for identity is built on and through language. This notion is supported by Lewis (2013, p. 681) who argues that "language is more than a means of communication. It is often viewed as a key marker of collective identity" and by Guardado & Becker (2014, p. 164) who argue that "The desire to

maintain family relationships is a common reason that parents give when asked why HLD is important to them". Thus, when a child acquires and develops its HL to its full potential, he or she may feel connected to his or her minority parent's cultural history, and family bonds may be intensified in this manner.

Additionally, the child will be able to communicate with relatives and friends from the heritage country and he or she will probably have access to two different cultures, traditions and ways of thinking which should broaden his or her horizon. As a result, he or she is more likely to develop cross-cultural competences and appropriate cross-cultural attitudes that is, he or she will behave in ways that are culturally sensitive and coherent. Therefore, a by-product of a strong bilingual education may be intercultural awareness and competence (Baker: 2011). Indeed, bilinguals may have enhanced empathy and appreciation of, and tolerance towards differences. These characteristic may aid the individual in overcoming stereotypes and prejudices and are greatly beneficial in a world that is full of conflict and intolerance.

Equally important is the fact that bilingualism leads to stronger self-esteem, to a positive attitude towards oneself, ones cultural background and identities. "Self-esteem is an indispensable tool in confronting the cultural and linguistic hegemony that is present throughout societal institutions and attitudes, and in forging a strong ethnic sense of self." (Guardado & Becker: 2014, p. 165). Additionally, a strong sense of self-esteem and the sense of being well rooted can raise motivation and productivity (Cillia: 2013), the effect may be perceived both in academic and professional areas, benefiting the individual and society in general.

3.4   Economic Advantages

Lastly, in addition to cognitive and socio-emotional benefits, being a bilingual individual may have economic implications. On the one hand, the bilingual individual might have better

career prospects in comparison to monolinguals. When both apply for the same position in a company for instance, it is more likely that the bilingual candidate will be hired rather than the monolingual candidate simply due to the fact that in the era of globalization the bilingual candidate may prove to be a more useful asset for the company, the company will after all be hiring two candidates in one, and this would be a money-saving measure.

On the other hand, there are also some benefits in a socio-economic sense, particularly in the case of those HL speakers who are encouraged by their host society to cultivate and maintain their HL, their heritage culture and their identity while making efforts to fully integrate themselves into their host society. This may lead the individual to feel accepted, important, valued, and welcome and at home, which may directly affect his or her sense of worth. As a result of this integration rather than assimilation approach, HL speakers may feel more confident and motivated to contribute more actively to their particular society. Such individuals will most likely want to repay by working hard and paying into the system rather than living from it. This notion is supported by Cummins (2001, p. 5) who argues that

> Multilingual children have an enormous contribution to make to their societies, and to the international global community […] In an era of globalization, a society that has access to multilingual and multicultural resources is advantaged in its ability to play an important social and economic role on the world stage […] the cultural, linguistic and intellectual capital of our societies will increase dramatically when we stop seeing culturally and linguistically diverse children as a "problem to be solved" an instead open our eyes to the linguistic, cultural, and intellectual resources they bring from their homes to our schools and societies.

The ability to acquire a language is inherent, and while being a bilingual has undoubtedly many advantages, simply speaking a language at home is not enough to support full acquisition and maintenance of a heritage language. O´Grady et al. (2009, p. 100) argue that "it seems safe to assume that there is no such thing as a natural inclination to abandon one's

native language. When a community shifts to a new language, it is always in response to external economic, social and political pressures." Thus, HL acquisition starts in the home and parents most certainly play a pivotal role. However, in order for HL to prosper a holistic approach is necessary, involving parents, some degree of formal education (especially considering that biliteracy is an indispensable aid in promoting balance bilingualism). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, since children learn from and through socialization, the full acquisition of a HL requires a community. No language can exist without a language community and

> While psychologists and linguists have studied the development of children's two languages, it is valuable to examine simultaneously the social and political context in which children acquire their language. Early bilingual development in the home, for example, does not take place in isolation. It occurs within a community, country and culture, which means that the home is surrounded by expectations, pressures and politics (Baker: 2011, p. 93).

While positive attitudes towards bilingualism are indispensable in fostering balanced bilingualism, they are not enough to create balanced bilinguals and prevent or counteract language shift. The HL speaker or learner needs to be provided with as many opportunities as possible to experience and use his or her heritage language in different domains within the language community in the society he or she lives in. It is argued here that in order to prevent language shift and to support HL speakers or leaners in their process of becoming biliterate, ad in order to help them achieve a desirable level of proficiency (thus becoming a balanced bilingual) that will enable him or her to profit from the many cognitive effects of bilingualism, additional formal education in the HL is also needed, be it community-based or organized by the state. In many cases, the community will be indispensable not only for the sake of socialization, but also because it can intervene when minorities' linguistic and cultural

rights are not being accorded due importance. This idea will be explored with more detail in the next chapters.

4   **Parents, System & Community**

4.1   **A Holistic Model to Prevent Language Shift and Promote Balanced Bilingualism**

Many scholars have argued that balanced bilingualism is a rare phenomenon or even a myth because "rarely are bilinguals and multilinguals equal in their ability or use of their two or more languages. Often one language is dominant. This can change over time" (Baker: 2011, p. 3). Some even suggest that this should not be the ultimate aim "Remember that your goal is not to produce a `balanced´ bilingual child. Bilingual children are not two monolinguals in one" (Garcia: 2013, p. 310).

While these and other arguments have their legitimacy in certain contexts, it will be argued here that balanced bilingualism is only a myth if the conditions that support its full development are poor or non-existent. In contexts where efforts are made to provide the bilingual individual, or indeed the bilingual community, with sufficient opportunities to immerse in, acquire, develop and maintain both the majority language and his or her HL in a balanced manner this goal is not only desirable but also achievable.

In this sense, HL speakers seem to be ideal candidates for achieving balanced bilingualism. It is important to highlight though that "heritage language acquisition is a complex process with a host of linguistic, affective, political, educational, social, and cultural variables affecting its outcome" (Montrul: 2010, p. 19) and in order to achieve this ambitious goal, conditions need to be present or created for HL to be acquired and developed to its full potential.

In this section the idea will be explored that as far as HL speakers are concerned, the best way to prevent language shift and loss is to provide these individuals with adequate exposure to ensure that the acquisition of the HL is complete, and thereby ensure some level of balanced bilingualism. In order to ensure that adequate exposure to the HL is available to HL speakers within main stream society, multiple efforts are necessary.

Based on the African idea that "it takes a whole village to raise a child" a holistic approach is called for if we are to promote successful HL transmission, revitalization and maintenance. The following model contains three main pillars: Parents, System and Community, reflecting how the promotion of a maximum level of quantitative and qualitative exposure to both the majority and minority languages can only be achieved through these three pillar's combined efforts. This idea is represented in figure 3:
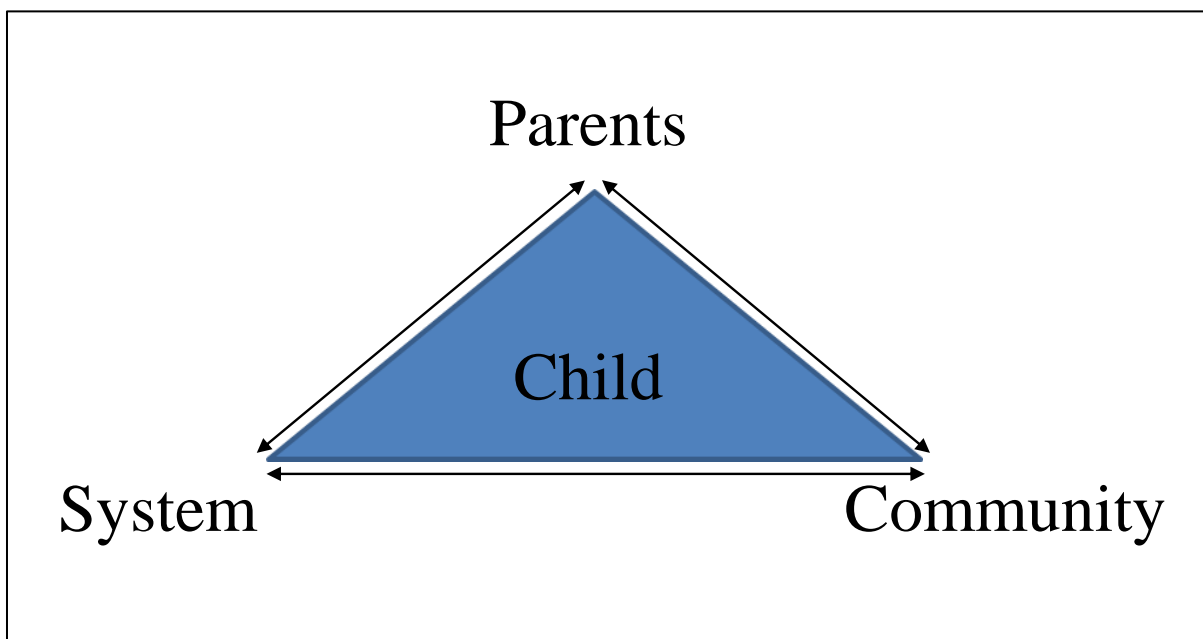

Figure 3: A holistic model to prevent language shift and promote balance bilingualism

Parents here will be used to refer to anyone who is in charge of or involved in the upbringing of a child, be it a couple, a single parent, multiple parents and even a grandparent. The *System* in turn, is a reference to the educational system and all it is composed of: politicians, policies (in this case in particular policies focussing on migration, language and education), the school authorities, the schools themselves, directors, and teachers and even materials used in teaching HL learners. Finally, *Community* refers to the HL community and all those

"language isles" that is, the individuals, the spaces and the activities in the HL which are present and offered within the society the child is brought up in.

Each of these three elements have their vital role or function, and in order to achieve the common goal of generating a balanced bilingual individual, these elements need to perform independently, and interact with and feed one another in a cooperative and active manner.

The holistic model's three pillars and their respective tasks, some of which overlap, will be discussed in the following sections.

4.2   The HL Home

4.2.1   The Foundation of Language Acquisition

The foundation of HL acquisition is indisputably the home and as Cummin (2001, p. 5) states: "Children's cultural and linguistic experience in the home is the foundation of their future learning and we must build on that foundation rather than undermine it;"

As soon as a child is conceived or born into a family who speaks a minority language (in particular in the case of binational or bicultural families where one parent is a native speaker of the dominant language and the other is a speaker of the minority language) decisions need to be made concerning the child's linguistic upbringing: "Should we raise our child bilingually?", "Should we use both languages from the start?", "Should we limit the use of the heritage language to certain situations?", "How can we best act in order to ensure our child's bilingualism and biculturalism?", "How much time and effort are we willing to invest in the bilingual upbringing of our child"?, "What strategies should we use?", "What misconceptions do we have concerning bilingualism?", "Where do you go to when challenges arise?" These are just some of the many questions parents in this particular situation will be faced with if they perceive that raising a child bilingually is important because speaking a particular

language implies belonging to a particular speech community (Edwards: 2004) and, additionally, because bilingualism is perceived to be advantageous.

However these questions are answered - and they will most certainly be answered differently as each family situation is unique - parents (or whoever is in charge of the child rearing) are responsible for creating a home environment that can either nurture or impair language acquisition. Some families may see fit to start with one language and add the second at a later stage as is the case in additive bilingualism. Other families may opt for transmitting both the minority and majority language simultaneously. Naturally, some may choose or find themselves in a position where they have very little option but to raise their child monolingually. In any case, whatever choices parents make, they are guardians of their heritage and ultimately it will be their choice whether to pass it on to their child or not. In brief their decisions and choices will be decisive in the process of acquisition, development, maintenance and retention of their child's HL language.

Kouritzin (2000, p. 311) has argues that "Familial language shift is a major if not the major contributor to the children's later loss of their heritage language with its attendant social, emotional, educational and political consequences". It is also well reported that children tend to rebel against or resist using their HL at a certain age, in particular upon entering school. Resistance towards the HL happens due to many reasons; a practical one is the fact that children will spend more time outside the home environment as they become more independent. It will especially happen if they perceive their "otherness" is not welcomed or approved of by their peers or authority figures such as their teachers. As a result, children might opt to exclusively use the dominant language instead. If parents give in at this critical stage and shift to the dominant or majority language there are consequences for the child. First, sooner or later the child will experience loss of or disconnection to his or her heritage language and consequently to his or her heritage cultural identity. Cummins (1991) has

argued that when children lose the facility in their HL a state of alienation takes place and that this may be prejudicial to the parent-child relationship, affecting family cohesion. The loss of the HL and cultural identity weakens family bonds. When a parent cannot communicate with his or her children, he or she is unable to pass on values and traditions that are pertinent to the family and the culture.

Perhaps one of the most detrimental effects of this language shift in the family is, however, the fact that when the parent who is the native speaker of the HL starts using the dominant language (not his native language) with the child, unless his or her command of the dominant language is perfect, he or she will be exposing the child to a nonstandard linguistic variety of the dominant language. Consequently, this will likely lead the child to have negative academic and professional outcomes in the future.

Therefore, raising a child in both the dominant language and the HL requires careful planning, a minimum level of knowledge and expertise and generally calls for external support. The idea of parents being experts shall be discussed next.

4.2.2   Parents as Experts

Bourgone (2012) notes that some families have high expectations concerning their children's bilingual education and proficiency level but do not undertake necessary planning in order to meet these expectations, becoming disappointed or demotivated when their goals are not achieved. The environment in which a child is raised plays a major role in achieving positive results; its planning and execution require time, patience and expertise.

One of the first decisions parents are likely to make, consciously or not, with regard to raising a bilingual child concerns the approach adopted. This decision is important because the achievement of the initial goal, namely raising a balanced bilingual, depends on the level of consistency in maintaining the chosen approach. As argued by Cummins (2001, p. 5)

to reduce the extent of language loss, parents should establish a strong home language policy and provide ample opportunities for children to expand the functions for which they use the mother tongue (e.g. reading and writing) and the contexts in which they can use it (e.g. community mother tongue day care or play groups, visits to the country of origin, etc.).

Three possible approaches in bilingual upbringing shall be discussed next.

4.2.3 Approaches

Bourgone (2012) presents three different approaches, their advantages and their drawbacks. The first is the so-called OPOL (one parent one language) approach. It is, on the one hand, the least complicated and most natural approach, especially for binational families. It is helpful in preventing chaos and the mixture of languages, and in fostering emotional links to both languages as it provides both parents the opportunity to build a relationship with the child in their own native language.

On the other hand, this approach has its challenges: Firstly, even if parents are consistent in using this approach it does not guarantee enough exposure to the minority language. Secondly, this approach may lead to feelings of isolation if one parent does not understand the language of the other. Lastly, this approach may be socially difficult to accept as people who do not understand the language may consider it rude or unacceptable when the parent chooses to stick to speaking this language to his or her child in all situations. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that most binational families will be left with very little choices but to choose the OPOL approach as argued by Bourgone (2012).

The second approach is referred to as ML@H (minority language at home), this approach is recommended in situations where both parents are native speakers of the minority language. Some families who do not fit this criteria may, nevertheless, opt for this approach because it is reported to increase the chances of success in the transmission of both languages as it

increases the opportunities for the child to use the minority language at home just as it increases the number of people the child can interact with in the minority language.

Similarly to the OPOL approach, the ML@H approach sets clear boundaries as to where and when the minority language is used, consequently, this avoids chaos and confusion. However, these advantages may soon disappear once the child starts schooling, as the exposure to the majority language increases. Finally, it requires that both parents feel proficient enough to transmit the minority language to the child (Bourgone: 2012).

The third approach is called MLP (mixed language policy) and it involves using one language in a particular domain and the other language in a different domain. Alternatively, one language may be the preferred one when discussing certain topics. This seems to be a commonly used approach in multilingual societies such as Canada and South Africa just to name a few. However, MLP is not the most recommended approach if the family's goal is to enable their child to achieve a higher level of proficiency in the minority language (Bourgone: 2012).

It is important to highlight that regardless of which approach a family may choose, this will not be a static situation and the family may have to re-evaluate its decisions once personal circumstances change. Once parents have settled for an approach, decisions need to be made on to how to put their plan into action. A key point in this respect is the adequate exposure to the heritage language and this is understood not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality. An adequate exposure is imperative not only to ensure the full acquisition and development of the child's heritage language but also of any further language he or she may want or have to learn in the future. This notion is supported by Cummins (2001, pp. 3-4) who argues that

When parents and caregivers (e.g grandparents) are able to spend time with their children and tell stories or discuss issues with them in a way that develops their mother tongue vocabulary and concepts, children come to school prepared to learn the school language and succeed educationally. Children's knowledge and skills transfer across languages from the mother tongue they have learned in the home to the school language […] transfer across two languages can be two-way […] both languages nurture each other when the educational environment permits children access to both languages."

Especially in the context of binational families, it is necessary that those who are in charge of transmitting the heritage language to the child take enough time to interact with the child in the HL. Bourgogne (2012) even stipulates a minimum amount of time for this interaction: twenty-five hours a week.

One could argue that this is an achievable goal while children are not in school and not in the charge of other caregivers (non-speakers of the HL). However, this may become a challenge once the child starts schooling, simply because he or she will be spending a larger amount of time at school, in some contexts it would mean long hours of exposure to the dominant language. This may become even more challenging if one of the parents is a native speaker of the dominant language and has no knowledge of his or her spouse's and child's HL. He or she may feel uncomfortable or excluded when the heritage language is used in the home. In some cases this parent might not see the importance of the family investing in the child's heritage language and disputes may arise as a result.

Hence, whether twenty-five hours a week of exposure to HL is a realistic goal or not, what matters is that parents are aware that their children will not become bilingual through wishful thinking. Knowledge, planning, consistent efforts and perhaps even some sacrifices are required from all involved to ensure that children get enough qualitative exposure to the HL.

Besides the time factor, it is important for the child to be exposed to a series of strategies that is, different communicative situations and activities carried out in the HL in order to assure that the child is able to develop his HL in all four abilities and thereby ensure that he or she has a sufficiently rich, that the child is able to understand and be understood in a range of different domains and that the child is able to understand and produce different language registers. These strategies are discussed next.

4.2.4 Strategies

In order to promote the development of all skills (receptive and productive) some strategies are necessary. It is worth mentioning that these strategies may and should be adapted to fit the needs and interests of different age groups.

As a rule parents should take time to consciously interact with their child. It is said that a child already starts to recognize voices in the womb (Allgäuer-Hackl & Boso: 2015), so it is important that parents start talking to the child already at this very early stage. Moreover, the ability to listen is imperative for the development of good speaking skills, so parents need to make sure they talk as much as possible to their child, paying attention to the quality of this input. The more one interacts, speaks and plays with a child, the more structures and networks are established in his/her brain. These structures and networks are important for the child's speech and language development and when he/she goes to school (Allgäuer-Hackl & Boso: 2015).

Once the child is born and in particular where there are several children in one household, parents need to make sure that they have time to interact with one child at a time while also encouraging the children to interact with one another and other family (nuclear or extended) members in the HL. As previously mentioned, the environment in which the language is

transmitted plays a major role. A natural and positive environment where critique and corrections are kept to a minimum will likely produce positive outcomes.

Regardless of the approach the family chooses (OPOL, ML@H or MLP) parents have to consciously make time to talk to and expose their child to the HL. If OLOP is the chosen route, this task might be easier because this effort may become more natural.

As recommendable in any child rearing situation, parents should talk about daily topics, activities and experiences with their child. These activities may be ordinary ones, those involved in a typical routine such as chatting and interacting while getting dressed, while eating, while reading stories, singing songs together or putting the child to bed. However, these activities may be also more elaborate and involve more planning, for instance when cooking together, doing arts and crafts, visiting a local museum or undertaking outdoor activities together. In this way the HL will inevitably be present in daily family life.

It is well reported that children tend to shift to the majority language when describing situations and activities they experience in the majority language only. Parents need to be aware of this in order to counteract this shift. One possible way is to reproduce situations lived in the majority language in the HL; this can be done by role play or conversations about a particular situation.

Whatever activity a parent and a child may be taking part in, it is important to be aware that simply giving a child orders or instructions will not guarantee the full development of his or her HL, the interaction between parent and child needs to be lively "Listening to and actively using a language or languages on a regular basis helps your child to discover the rules of that language/those languages. Your child can learn words, explore the grammar of those languages and communicate correctly with others. Your child needs lots of input and should

not only be listening a lot but also talking a lot" (translated from Allgäuer-Hackl & Boso: 2015, p. 10).

Moreover, in the case of HL speakers, it is particularly important to introduce and talk about people and situations in the heritage country. This will help the child to create affectionate bonds and, in turn, will serve as a major motivation in learning and maintaining the language. Children need to grasp (even if initially only on an unconscious level) that their HL is not just the language of their mother or father, but that it is also the language of other important people in their lives and ultimately the language of a nation, of a people.

In the past, establishing this kind of bond may have been an enormous challenge considering that the geographic distances are great and the possibility of visiting the heritage country on a regular basis may have been or still is a financial challenge to many families. The era of internet has been a major contributor in shortening many of these distances, families can now communicate with their relatives on a daily basis if they wish to do so; parents who make use of this opportunity will likely have fewer difficulties in establishing bonds and identification in their children.

 Another vital aspect in the promotion of balanced bilingualism is biliteracy, and this should start at an early age. Reading is one of the main pillars in bilingual education, as Bourgogne (2013, pp. 100-101) argues it

> Not only helps to develop a deeper fluency in both languages, but also gain access to the cultures in question […] to have access to the language in all its richness, with vocabulary and nuances, there is nothing that can replace immersion in children's literature. Books present children with different vocabulary than what their parents use, and fill in the gaps that they might have in their language due to not living in a country where that language is widely spoken.

Indeed, making the act of reading stories in the HL a habit will not only enrich the child's language but also it will strengthen the ties between child and parent. Thus it is imperative that the child is provided access to ample reading resources from an early age. When families have limited possibilities to acquire reading resources, a visit to the local library may be promising. Many libraries have a multilingual section, and even in cases when resources in a particular minority language are not available, libraries may have the means to acquire them if they perceive that there is a clientele for it in the community. Besides, nowadays many books are offered freely in digital form on the internet.

Reading in the HL is also indispensable because

> Research shows that reading aloud to children in the very first years of their life has a beneficial effect on children's speech and language development. Reading aloud and telling stories expands a child's vocabulary. It also creates a good foundation for reading and writing. Written language differs from spoken language. When you read aloud to your child, he/she is also listening to and learning the written language. Children who listen to and retell stories learn a lot of things that will later help them in school. For example, they learn to listen, to concentrate, to remember events, new words, and new sentence patterns (translated from Allgäuer-Hackl & Boso: 2015, p. 12).

However, reading for or with the child in the HL only once in a while will not provide sufficient input. It is necessary that parents create constant reading habits in their homes: bed time stories, bath reading rituals are some examples of reading habits that are advisable until the child reaches the age where he or she is able to, and keen to read on his or her own. Here it is important to add, that for older children in particular the amount of hours they spend at school and the work load they will likely have, will make reading in the HL on a daily basis a challenge for some. Nevertheless, effort should be made and once a week reading activities

seems to be a realistic goal. More frequent reading sessions would be ideal. Reading has also the positive side effect of providing topics for conversations, discussions and role play.

Parents should encourage relatives and friends in the native country to communicate with the child or the family through writing (letters, post cards, e-mails or via social media). This is not only a medium of further exposing the child to the heritage language but it will support bonding. It will encourage biliteracy further, and once children start to write in the HL they are more likely to be better prepared to nurture for those bonds themselves.

Additionally, other good strategies are teaching the child typical songs, rhymes and games or celebrating typical holidays. This exposes the child to the HL in a fun way while offering the possibility to experience traditions and customs associated with the heritage culture, which is useful in helping the child to become bicultural in addition to being bilingual. Visits to the heritage country or to a country where the HL is spoken will intensify the bicultural experience as the child is one hundred percent immersed in the HL and culture.

When personal circumstances hinder frequent travel to the heritage country, parents should look for opportunities within the community to offer their child a more intensive exposure to the HL. Exchange students, au pairs, play groups, cultural, religious and sports activities in the heritage language are just some of the many possible sources of exposure to the heritage language within the community. Their role will be discussed in more detail later on. Connecting to other expats is helpful because it will provide children the possibility to experience the HL within different settings and other people, and parents with encouragement and support in their journey through the bilingual education of their child.

Therefore, raising a child bilingually may be time consuming, energy draining and in some cases, it may be cost intensive and demanding for families. It requires a great level of dedication and commitment. Parents' main task concerning the bilingual education of their

child in the home is to educate themselves and thereby prepare themselves to make informed decisions. They must also choose an approach that best suits their needs and reality and use it consistently, reassessing it whenever personal circumstances change. And finally, it is also the parent's task to make use of a wide range of strategies that will maximise the exposure to the HL in a number of different contexts and situations.

When the HL input at home is adequate - and this is, as argued by Melo-Pfeifer (2015), the result of efforts that are based on the perception of the importance of bilingualism and bilingual education as well as their academic, economic and socio implications - it is possible to maintain a balance between both languages, at least until the child reaches school age. It is around the time the child begins schooling in the dominant language that challenges will occur: the chief reason being that the exposure to the dominant language will be far more intensive than the HL. Furthermore, as already mentioned, if parents do not exercise a strong language policy at home and the child is not strongly encouraged to use his or her HL as often as possible and in as many different domains as possible, he or she will ultimately choose to use the dominant language more and more. This notion is supported by Cummins (2001, pp. 4-5) who argues that

> Educators are often less aware about how quickly children can lose their ability to use their mother tongues, even in the home context. The extent and rapidity of language loss will vary according to the concentration of families from a particular linguistic group in the school and neighbourhood. Where the mother tongue is used extensively in the community outside the school, then language loss among young children will be less. However, where language communities are not concentrated or "ghettoized" in particular neighbourhoods, children can lose their ability to communicate in their mother tongue within 2-3 years of starting school. They may retain receptive (understanding) skills in the language but they will use the majority language in speaking with their peers and siblings and in responding to their parents. By the time children become adolescents, the linguistic gap between parents and children has

become an emotional chasm. Pupils frequently become alienated from the cultures of both home and school with predictable results.

The loss of the HL might not occur or become visible immediately, but through the intensification of exposure to the dominant language and the resulting diminishing use of the HL, the extent of the individual's vocabulary in the HL will be impoverished in comparison to the dominant language. If he or she never learnt to read or write, the acquisition may indeed never be completed and a shift to the majority language will become noticeable. This is why formal education in the HL is a desirable goal; it will be an indispensable aid in strengthening HL transmission and maintenance, in promoting balanced bilingualism, and consequently, combating and reversing language shift.

Different forms of HLE and their implications and effects shall be presented next. Additionally the organization of the Austrian HLE program as well as some of its challenges will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.3   The System

4.3.1   Different Forms of HLE

Formal HLE is a powerful tool in preventing or even reversing language shift and generally speaking it can be either community based or organized by the state. Both forms have their pros and cons. When organized by the community HLE usually takes place in the form of after-school, weekend-, one-day-a-week or religion-based programs (Baker: 2011). Generally parents seem to be the driving force behind such efforts, and funding derives mostly from private sources. It is important to note that this form of HLE is usually an issue for families of lower income as opting for this form of HLE would add extra pressure to the family budget. State subsidised HLE usually takes place within the school system. In some cases it is possible to use the HL as a means of instruction at least fifty percent of the time. However,

generally speaking, state subsidised HLE programs take place in the form of after school programs and only a limited number of weekly hours are offered.

It is important to highlight that both forms have their advantages and disadvantages. Considering funds, state organized and subsidised HL programs are more advantageous especially considering that some minority groups are at the lower positions in the social scale in several parts of the world, having to pay for their children's education would add extra financial pressure, leading to many families opting to not send their children to community based programs. This may be the case because despite perceiving the value and importance of such programs, some families simply cannot afford it, in particular when families have more than one child to educate.

Additionally, it can be assumed that if a host state is truly concerned about the HL maintenance of its HL speakers, then it will also care about the quality of its HLE program. For instance, when it comes to the selection of professionals to carry out this task, most HL teachers are educated in their country of origin. This raises a number of questions; do their qualifications meet the standards of the host state? Are these teachers bilingual themselves? How interculturally competent are they? Moreover, the state may also be interested in organizing a support network for all involved namely, policy makers, outreach workers, educators, parents etc. On the other hand, however, parents may have less influence in state based programs when it comes to curriculum and small matters of organization such as the time and place of instruction. Community programs, by contrast, may be much more individualized and flexible in meeting the needs of its clientele.

Another advantage of state organized programs is that they usually take place in a school setting. When children's HLs have a place in a school setting, one can assume that they are viewed and handled in a positive way. As a result, minority children's cultural and linguistic

identities and cultural background are affirmed in a proactive manner. When instead children's languages and cultures are not welcome at school, the results are disastrous: not only will the child leave part of his or her identity at home, but he or she is unlikely to participate as actively and confidently in other school activities. This in turn will likely impact on his or her academic performance (Cummins: 2001). Therefore, honouring the different heritages in a school setting is a powerful confidence booster and an important tool in combating prejudices and intolerance towards minorities.

4.3.2 The Effects of Formal Education in HL Maintenance

While "There is as yet no standard approach to teaching heritage learners" (Kagan & Dillan: 2008, p. 151) and, as Fishman (1991) has argued, schools alone cannot reverse the effects of language shift. According to Valdez (2001) they do have an important role to play. First, schools can contribute to raising awareness of the importance of maintaining a HL, and to the identity forming process of speakers of HLs who, as a result of formal HLE, will hopefully see themselves as lifetime speakers of their HL and will make efforts to pass on that language to their children. For individuals who already have experienced some degree of language shift, formal education in the HL may aid in reversing this shift by revitalizing the HL. As a result of this legitimatization approach, marginalized languages and their respective communities could gain more confidence.

Having proficiency in a language requires more than just speaking or being able to comprehend that language. Thus, formal HLE may aid in promoting the development of language skills that are not acquired in the home domain (or which are acquired at home but only on a small scale). Literacy is a good example, due to lack of time and, academic competence and other restrains, some families may not be in a position to teach their children to read and write in the HL. Literacy in the HL is imperative if balanced bilingualism is to be

achieved and formal HLE has an important contribution to make in this respect. The acquisition process of a HL is commonly abruptly interrupted when children commence schooling in the majority language. Important grammatical structures, vocabulary and literacy need to be complimented by school socialization. Cillia (2013) argues that on a superficial level it is hardly possible to detect any negative consequences stemming from a fragile acquisition of the HL at this stage. These become more evident at a later stage when children are required to deal with more abstract concepts. Cillia therefore, calls for not only support in the L2 but also for literacy training and long term tuition in the HL.

Furthermore, some children are only exposed to non-standard varieties of their HL at home. Thus, formal HLE is also a means of transmitting the standard variety of the HL. It is also a means of transmitting grammatical accuracy, and of leading the learner into acquiring academic registers and academic language proficiency. These are goals that are supportive of balanced bilingualism.

Finally, Valdez (2001, p. 27) points out that formal HLE education will provide learners with the possibility of achieving five different goals. First, it will help learners in achieving the goal of continuing to "develop a greater bilingual communicative range." Second, it will help learners to obtain "knowledge of other heritage language cultures." Third, "using the heritage language to connect with other disciplines and to acquire new information" is also a goal that can be supported by formal HLE. Fourth, it will provide learners with the opportunity of developing "even more insights than they already have into the nature of language and culture". Last but not least, formal HLE will encourage individuals to become "lifelong learners of the language by participating in multilingual communities at home and around the world."

Kagan & Dillon (2008, p. 147) point out that

Because of the home-based nature of their language acquisition, even heritage speakers with high proficiency in speaking and listening generally lack the skills shaped by formal education that would allow them to function in an academic or professional setting. Heritage speakers also may display traits of nonstandard or émigré language and dialectic features, and their language may be marked by code switching […] borrowings and calques, all features that require tailored instruction if heritage speakers are to acquire standard professional level language skills.

Therefore, while formal HLE alone will not prevent language shift it is, nevertheless, an important tool for empowering families in their efforts to transmit their HL to their descendants.

In Austria, under the name of *Muttersprachlicher Unterricht*, HLE is offered by the state in a number of languages. In the next section, detailed information on the objectives, and organization, as well as the challenges of the Austrian HL maintenance program will be discussed.

4.3.3 Objectives and Organization of the Austria's HL Maintenance Program and its Challenges

The organization of the so called "*Muttersprachlicher Unterricht"* has a legal foundation[9]; it is part of the Austrian regular school system. HL teachers are recruited and paid by the Austrian education authorities, as is the case for other teaching staff. Additionally, HL teachers are inspected and evaluated by the school's supervising authority. Its main objectives are:[10][11]

[9] http://sprachenrechte.at/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/9_Handout-muttersprachlicher-Unterricht.pdf

[10] https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/lp/ahs20_795.pdf?4dzgm2

[11] https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/lp/VS9T_Muttersp_3937.pdf?4dzgm2

- To help to create a positive attitude towards bilingualism, to strengthen the individual's identity and to support his or her integration process.

- To consolidate the mother tongue/first language as a basis for the individual's education process and for the acquisition of further languages.

- To transmit knowledge on the country of origin or heritage (culture, literature, societal structure, economic and political conditions etc.).

- To promote the learner reflection on their origins/roots and their current living environment.

- To support the reappraisal of bicultural and bilingual experiences and thereby build bridges between cultures and generations.

The program is offered in primary schools and in the initial years of special needs schools. During the primary school years, participation is on a voluntary basis and students´ performances are not graded. In other school levels (middle, high school etc.) it is offered as an optional subject. Thus participation is still voluntary but students' performances are evaluated and graded.

HL classes in Austria can be organized in an additive manner. For instance, they might occurafter the last school lesson or in the afternoon, and they have a course character. Additionally they can also be offered in form of team teaching, especially in cases where there is a large number of students who have a common HL. However, it usually takes place in an after school setting, and in order to meet the prerequisites in regards regarding numbers prescribed by the school authorities (usually a minimum of twelve students) for opening a group, often children from different schools, or different age and proficiency levels all are united in a single class and school.

According to the ministry of education it is possible to offer any language as long as interest is reported to the school authorities (and it should be the school's responsibility to assess and report possible interest)[12], as long as the prescribed minimum amount of students pre-exists, qualified teaching staff are available, and the correspondent resources related to his or her recruitment are taken in consideration.

In the year of 2012/13 of all eighty HL that are found in Austrian society, twenty five different HLs[13] were offered in maintenance programs in the school system. These were: Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BKS), Bulgarian, Chinese, Dari, French, Italian, two varieties of Kurdish (Kurmanji & Zazaki), Pashto, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romani, Rumanian, Russian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Spanish, Somalian, Czech, Chechen, Turkish and Hungarian.

Despite all good will and intentions, the program faces a number of challenges. Perhaps the most striking challenge the Austrian HLE program faces has to do with issues of lack of awareness of the importance of HL maintenance which results in HLE promotion suffering. As already mentioned, it is the school's responsibility to inform new families about this offer upon enrolment, and to assess their interest. The results of a case study conducted with two language minorities in Tirol and Vorarlberg will be presented in chapter seven, and they will show that this is not always the case. Headmasters and teachers still seem to fail to pass on this vital information to parents, and as a result recruitment of new students is affected as not all HL speakers are being reached out to.

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[12] http://www.schule-mehrsprachig.at/fileadmin/schule_mehrsprachig/redaktion/muttersprachlicher_unterricht/9muttunt-rs14-erl.pdf

[13] http://www.schule-mehrsprachig.at/fileadmin/schule_mehrsprachig/redaktion/Hintergrundinfo/info5-13-14.pdf

Establishing the reasons for this lack of communication with accuracy would go beyond the scope of this thesis as it requires a more profound study that includes school authorities and staff. For now this thesis focuses mostly on information given by the families themselves. Nevertheless, this is important information that should be carefully considered when trying to investigate why only just a few HL speakers are benefiting from HLE in Austria.

Another challenge faced by the HLE program in Austria is connected to the recruitment of suitable teaching staff. As argued by Kagan & Dillon (2008, p. 144) "when heritage speakers pursue formal study of their heritage language, they present a challenge to language educators who are trained to teach foreign language learners, that is students without previous knowledge of the target language." Indeed in Austria, like most parts of the world, there is no specific training in HL teaching. As a result, some professionals who are employed in this area are often overwhelmed by the challenges of the job. Classes that contain students of different age ranges, mixed linguistic backgrounds and competence levels, who often present very divergent needs and interests.

In particular in the case of less commonly spoken languages, teaching a HL will likely be a lonely task, as there will be hardly any other teachers of the same language to network with. Another issue is that most professional development courses offered in Austria still target the reality of major languages such as Turkish or Serbian and Croatian, and neglect the issues and realities of less commonly taught languages.

There are also challenges concerning retaining students in the program. This may be due to the fact that, as already mentioned, the reality of many language minority groups is such, that in order to form a new class, students of different ages and of different linguistic backgrounds will be brought together. Targeting everyone's needs and interest becomes an enormous challenge in such a context. Where there is hardly any support network for teachers to help

them to deal with such challenges, this will likely affect the quality of teaching and student's motivation to attend HL classes in such a context may consequently suffer. Retention may become inevitably an issue.

Thus, while there is a state organised and subsidised HLE program in Austria, it displays some weaknesses in the areas of outreach, communication between schools and families, staff and student recruitment, infra-structure, teacher training and networking, and the retention of HL students etc. All need to be tackled if we are serious about preventing language shift and promoting balanced bilingualism.

Finally, besides the linguistic foundation laid in the family and the additional formal instruction in the HL, the community has an important role to play. Baker (2011) points out that without people languages have no existence, and that when the last speaker of a language dies, then this language no longer exists. If we apply this to the heritage language learner, it would seem exaggerated to thing that Spanish or Portuguese for example, would become dormant if the child no longer spoke it. However, on an individual bilingualism level, a language would likely die for the HL learner if he or she no longer had the chance to use it. As a result he or she will progressively shift to the majority language. Therefore, as discussed in the following section, strengthening linguistic communities is a crucial issue in preventing language shift and promoting balanced bilingualism.

4.4   The HL Community

4.4.1   Language Socialization

Crystal (in Baker: 2011) presents five arguments for retaining language diversity. For him diversity is essential, languages express identity and are repositories of history, they contribute to the sum of present human knowledge and they are interesting in themselves. However, no man is an island, and a language cannot develop to its full potential without

sufficient socialization as the case discussed by Lyon (1996) shows. He describes the situation of a thirty months old Welsh toddler whose parents were English speaking. The family lived in a mainly Welsh-speaking area, but the toddler's language development seemed rather slow. After lengthy discussion about how children acquire language the parents decided to send the toddler to a Welsh-speaking playgroup and in no time his skills improved to the extent that he was able to start primary schooling in both languages with no further complications. Although this example refers to a linguistic situation particular to Wales, it can be applied to any context where bilingualism takes place. It illustrates the importance of providing bilingual children and youngsters with enough opportunities to interact in their HL with other children and other individuals outside the home domain as children learn mostly through socialization. In the next section the concept of "linguistic islands" will be explained and their importance in providing opportunities for language exposure will be discussed.

4.4.2   The Importance of "Linguistic Islands"

Fishman (2004, p. 416) has argued in favour of so called "linguistic islands" for him they are imperative if we are to combat and reverse language shift because

> Without such self-supported, self-protected and self-initiated islands of demographically concentrated local non-English language-and-culture transmission, particularly given the social mobility, modernization, and urban interaction so typical of American life, non-English mother tongues lack "safe houses" or "safe harbours", wherein the young can be socialized according to the languages, values, and traditions of side stream cultures. They also increasingly lack a protected intimate space for adults and old folks during their after-work and out-of-work lives. The work sphere, the mass media and the common political system will all guarantee that cultural "safe harbours" do not become foreign, isolated, or hostile enclaves. Indeed, the brunt of American historical experience as a whole has provided ample evidence – even among avowed separatists language-and-culture groups – that the major language

maintenance problem faced is one of engulfment by mainstream rather than one of excessive separation from it.

The term "linguistic islands" refers to spaces and activities within main stream society where a HL can be lived and experienced in a natural way, that is, free of formal instruction. These "linguistic islands" can be of a sportive, artistic, musical, literary, folkloric, entertainment or even religious nature. They are of major importance in the pursuit and attainment of a greater level of intergenerational mother-tongue transmission (Fishman: 2004).

Besides increasing language exposure, the existence of "linguistic islands" also provides social ties that strengthen the use of the HL outside the home domain "being that children are socialised both through language and into language use within a community" (Guardado & Becker: 2014, p. 165). Additionally, these "linguistic islands" serve as a reassuring and strengthening force for parents and indeed the community itself who in hostile contexts "must constantly justify themselves, in the face of a wall of doubt and disbelief, for simply doing what is normal all over the world, namely, making sure that their children are following in the ethnolinguistic and ethnocultural footsteps of their parents and grandparents" (Fishman: 2004, p. 414).

The creation and support of such "linguistic islands" within mainstream society depend largely on a certain level of organization and cohesion being present in the ethnolinguistic community. Community cohesion is largely triggered by familism (Guardado& Becker: 2014) as seen in the next section.

4.4.3 "Familism" and Community Cohesion and Intermediate Space

While much of language transmission and acquisition takes place in the home domain, it is not enough to guarantee the full development of a HL. This is so because just one domain and, a severely limited number of speakers (particularly in the case of binational families

where there is often only a single person in charge of transmitting the HL), are insufficient to provide the child with enough language exposure and experience. As a result, the language experiences he or she has at home are often only limited to daily events around home life. Even when children do have the possibility of being formally educated in the HL, access to maintenance programs is not guaranteed in all geographical regions. Where maintenance programs are offered, they are usually offered for a limited amount of hours in Austria. Thus, the community may provide the HL speaker with further language experience.

Guardado & Becker (2014) assert that for some communities *familism* plays a major role in the transmission and maintenance of language, cultural values and traditions. *Familism* is defined as and sought after because communities try to

> The fundamental values that foster feelings of identification with and attachment to the nuclear and extended family as a unit, strongly emphasising loyalty and mutual support among its members […] Fill the familial void that is created upon migration away from their family members. Part of filling this void includes the search for 'surrogate extended family members' [...] a kind of diasporic familism, in which these surrogate family members 'become important sources of input and support for the home language and culture and one of the aims of families' language socialization efforts' (Guardado & Becker:2014, pp. 163 - 164).

For many families the wish to maintain ties to their families in the heritage country is the driving force behind transmitting the HL to their descendants. Thus, in the absence of the natural family, it seems only natural that a surrogate family is necessary to support any efforts in this respect. This sort of community cohesion has a socializing role, and it promotes ethnic affirmation and is important because "as much as parents might like to blame themselves for, or credit themselves with, their children's proficiency in their HL, the past few decades of

sociolinguistic research point to the fact that children's linguistic and cultural participation in a larger community can be as significant as the role of the family" (Guardado & Becker: 2014, p. 165).

For some language minorities having access to or building this kind of community cohesion may be a simple task, especially if the community is numerous and the necessary resources are available. However, for smaller and less visible language minority communities this task may be rather challenging. Nevertheless, having or creating access to different contexts (within mainstream society) where a child can socialize through his or her HL additionally to his or her home domain is imperative if we are to prevent language shift because

> Unless a culture supports its own major institutions it becomes dependent upon "outsiders" (the federal government, the city council, the state legislature, foundations and other "foreign" charities) for the continuation, stabilization and growth of its own ethnolinguistic lifelines" […] A culture and its language cannot live on an externally dependent life-support system and there is nothing that promotes good cultural health more than the collective efforts to stay alive and to remain healthy on one's own" (Fishman: 2004, pp. 415-416).

Therefore it may be wise to support and strengthen peer groups, community or parents associations and any organism involved in promoting or reinforcing knowledge about the history, culture, values, traditions and language through socialization activities. This would not only promote HL transmission and maintenance, but more importantly, it would empower minorities to organize and support themselves in becoming independent actors in their efforts to transmit their HL and cultural values.

Furthermore, empowered communities may act as an intermediate space and as an intermediator that builds bridges between members of the ethnolinguistic community providing the ethnolinguistic minority, in particular children, with the possibility to "simultaneously navigate two distinct spaces, geographical and symbolic, and draw tools from

these spaces to make sense of their identity, then their bilingual development becomes an echo of these two spaces" (Makar: 2013, p. 54).

This kind of space does not sanction both languages and cultural practices, nor it does it place them in competition with each other, but it helps individuals to make sense of their realities and indeed their identities, creating a sense of belonging to both countries as a result. This sense of belonging is neither defined nor restricted by geographical boarders. Thus in what countries HL speakers are born is not an issue (Makar: 2013). In this space, according to Canagarajah (2013, p. 152) individuals are able to

> Address their personal interests of socioeconomic mobility by constructing hybrid identities, without abandoning their affiliation with their heritage language and ethnic community. They are able to accomplish this feat by constructing ideologies of language and ethnicity that are flexible enough to let them shuttle across spatiotemporal contexts and communities easily. We can understand this possibility only if we understand identities and community membership as situational rather than static. It is not impossible for people to adopt one set of identities, values and language practices in one space/time, while adopting others (often conflicting ones) in other contexts.

Far from aiming at promoting social ghettos, the idea of an intermediate space is that they may serve as a bridge between two spaces that are in juxtaposition: the country and culture of heritage and the host country and culture. A third space is created in the process which, according to Makar (2013, p. 54) is

> An arena that draws from this juxtaposition to recreate a unique social and linguistic space. This third space is both symbolic and tangible insofar as it hosts the culture and imagination of these communities as well as material products of this juxtaposition. The translanguaging practices of these children can be seen as a material manifestation of this third space. Thus, rather than deterritorializing these languages, members of the community have found a way to reshape their practices; these students inhabit their own space, a third space that is rooted in the lived practices.

In this third space individuals are not only granted the opportunity to regain, connect with and care for their heritage, but they are given the freedom to choose to move freely in their current situation "from one country to another, from one language to the other in a dialectic exercise of their identity and their dreams" (Makar: 2013, p. 57).

Additional to this intermediate space, communities (in particular when they are organized) may also have the role of an intermediator. Makar (2013, p. 58) points out that the role of some of these communities' organization "has been to pick up where the schools have left off, often trying to complement with limited resources the work of schools". If system fails to cater adequately for its minority population, and the rights or needs of HL speakers are not being adequately met, the linguistic community may become a proactive voice that speaks for and works towards raising awareness on both camps.

When the value and importance of bilingual education are not acknowledged within the school setting and bilingualism is perceived as a disadvantage, communities may intervene and initiate and awareness raising process. Should there be a communication gap between the school and parents when it comes to HLE policies, an informed and empowered community can take on the roles of information provider to parents, and intercessor between parents and the schools. Ensuring that valuable information reaches its due destination and that collaboration between the school and parents is optimized. This kind of inter-institutional collaboration is not only important in guaranteeing minorities rights, but also in ensuring that a high level of academic achievement in the HL is obtained.

But most importantly, a strong and organized community may work towards empowering its members to feel secure about their ethnic identity and find solutions that fit their own personal realities when striving to combat HL erosion and loss. When there is lack of knowledge or information with regards to bilingualism in general, the community may point towards useful

sources and positive experiences or, alternatively, become the source of those experiences and information.

In conclusion, balanced bilingualism is not an easy task but it is achievable in so far as conditions are created for it to flourish. In this chapter a holistic model requiring mutual efforts and cooperation from families, the school system and ethnolinguistic communities has been presented. It has been argued that the application of this model can help prevent language shift through creating significant HL exposure for learners.

In order to assess to what extent this concept is already being realised, albeit consciously or unconsciously, a case study was conducted involving two language minorities in Western Austria. This case study and its results shall be presented and discussed in the next chapter.

5   Case Study

5.1   Introduction

In order to explore and describe issues faced by Portuguese and Spanish speaking language minorities in the task of raising their children bilingually, a descriptive case study was conducted in Tirol and Vorarlberg. Its primary goals were to gain an overview of issues faced by these two communities in the process of raising their children bilingually, to assess to what extent ideas presented in the holistic model for balanced bilingualism discussed in chapter four are being practised. It also seeks to determine whether and to what degree there are signs of language shift in the study group and whether there are possible explanations for language shift within this particular group. The results will hopefully aid in understanding the situation of minorities and support decision-making processes concerning language policies.

According to Yin (1994) "a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). It is the preferred strategy "when `how´ or `why´ questions are being, when the investigator has little control over events" (p. 1). Moreover, it was the chosen research strategy here because of its comprehensive nature. Yin argues that a case study may be exploratory (with the aim of developing propositions for further study), descriptive (its primary goal being to describe something unknown) and explanatory (aiming at making conclusions about why a phenomenon occurs with the intention of generalizing results to other situations). Seeing that HLE is, a as previously discussed, a rarely discussed topic in Austria, a descriptive case study seemed to be the right choice in this case.

The prerequisites for the selection of samples were: individuals had to be either native speakers of Spanish or Portuguese, or at least be in a partnership with a native speaker of one

of these two languages. Additionally, participants should have at least one child currently undergoing schooling in the Austrian school system, in other words, a child ranging from 6-19 approximately. Reasons for focusing on parents at this stage were: seeing that language acquisition begins in the home, parents' experiences, concerns and views are pivotal in HLE. Additionally, involving school authorities and even children for that matter, would have been time consuming and beyond the scope of this thesis.

A total of forty-two individuals from ten different nationalities took part in the study: two Argentinians, an Austrian, a Bolivian, twenty-two Brazilians, a Chilean, four Dominicans, three Ecuadorians, a Peruvian, a Romanian and six Spanish people. The participants are parents of sixty-five school-aged children ranging from six to nineteen years old, who are owners of Portuguese and Spanish as a HL. Except for three participants, all live in binational relationships. Naturally one could ask whether the sample presented here is large enough to be representative for the entire population. As Walliman (2011, p. 97)) argues "no sample will be exactly representative of a population", thus, considering the practicalities of a larger sample collection in terms of cost, time and effort and the fact that the studied sample is quite homogenous it is safe to say that the relatively small sample presented here provides a "fairly representative view of the whole" (Walliman: 2011, p. 97).

Recruitment in Vorarlberg took place via the Austrian HLE program, the "Muttersprachlicher Unterricht". Whereas in Tirol, participants were recruited via four different social media platforms: "ACHT" (Associación de Hispanoablantes en Tirol), "Mujeres Hispanohablantes en Tirol", "Mala de Leitura em Tirol" and "Brasileiros em Tirol". There was an unsuccessful attempt to reach out to the Brazilian community in Vorarlberg, despite being one of the largest migration groups in the region. Unlike the Brazilian community in Tirol, there does not seem to be any level of community cohesion for Brazilians in Vorarlberg which hindered recruitment attempts. Likewise, there was an attempt to recruit candidates from the HLE

program for Spanish in Tirol. However at the time of the study it was not possible as the HL teacher in charge had just moved back to her country of origin and the program had been temporarily discontinued.

In order to ensure that the participants were familiarized with concepts and terminology related to the case study and to assess the expectations, fears, difficulties but also some of the solutions these individuals encounter in their efforts to raise their children bilingually, a workshop was organized through "Mala de Leitura em Tirol", a community-based project dedicated to the transmission, revitalization and maintenance of Portuguese as a HL in the region. Out of the twenty-six participants from Tirol, a total of eighteen participants in the case study (all of Brazilian nationality) took part in the workshop. For the sixteen participants from Vorarlberg no workshops were offered as they have been widely promoted in the past by "Okay Zusammenleben", an organization that is involved in the revitalization and maintenance of many HLs in the region. Based on information provided by the teacher in charge of the HLE program for Spanish in Vorarlberg, it was concluded that these parents were already well-informed and rather competent in their use of relevant terminology for the case study. Therefore, further workshops for this particular group were not deemed necessary. Eight other candidates of different nationalities and residents in Tirol could not participate in any workshops in either of these two states. Therefore, it was not possible to know beforehand what background these participants had concerning the discussion.

5.2   Data Collection

Once parents had agreed to participate in the case study, the next step was to invite all candidates to a meeting in Vorarlberg and to a meeting in Tyrol to proceed with the data collection. On both occasions formalities concerning the terminology were clarified and ethical rules relating to the handling of provided data were established. Candidates were then

asked to answer a questionnaire (those who could not attend these meeting were interviewed over the phone) featuring questions on the parent's backgrounds thirty questions related to: approaches and strategies they used in the transmission of the HL, their level of awareness of the advantages of bilingual education and of individual rights in this respect, their access to information and attitudes towards bilingual education, their personal reasons and motivation for raising a bilingual child, their child's level of exposure to HL and majority language, the level of support and of cooperation among families, the school system and community. Baker's (2011) functional bilingualism scales were used as a self-rating instrument, they "measure actual use of two languages as opposed to proficiency" (Baker: 2011, pp. 30-32) and were considered as an useful diagnostic tool to establish if both languages are used in a balanced fashion, or to what degree language shift is an issue. Due to the rather complex nature of the here proposed holistic model for balanced bilingualism, a questionnaire which considered many of the aspects discussed in chapter four was the chosen data collection instrument because as Walliman (2011, p. 97) points out

> As a method of data collection, the questionnaire is a very flexible tool, that has the advantages of having a structured format, is easy and cheap and quick to administer to a large number of cases covering large geographical areas.

In order to ensure some level of external validity (Walliman: 2011), the questionnaires were run in a trial sampling with four different candidates. During the trial it became evident that despite initial assumptions, not all participants had the level of language proficiency that would enable them to reply to the questionnaire in German with ease. Therefore, in order to avoid misunderstandings, decrease any margin of error, and to achieve a high response rate, the questionnaires were then translated into Portuguese and Spanish. Consequently, candidates would be able to answer with ease in their L1. The English version of the questionnaires can be found in Annex1.

Additionally, the question was raised as to whether the questionnaire should be delivered by post, via the internet or personally. The latter was ultimately the chosen path, and all questionnaires were answered in the presence and with the assistance of a surveyor. One of the main advantages of a surveyor being presence is that "respondents can be helped to overcome difficulties with the questions and can be persuaded and reminded in order to ensure a high response rate" (Walliman: 2011, p. 97). The presence of a surveyor proved to be the right choice regarding those eight respondents who had not previously participated in any workshops as they were indeed unfamiliar with some of the used nomenclature.

After the completion of the data collection, all results were entered onto an Excel sheet and analysed with the aid of the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 program. The data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative analysis is helpful in measuring, making comparison, examining relationships, testing hypotheses, exploring, controlling and explaining (Walliman: 2011). It is descriptive in its essence but it also has got some limitations as it does not allow one to make predictions, and it does not offer solutions for problems, and it cannot identify which problem should be handled as a priority. In this sense qualitative data analyses compliments quantitative data analysis well as it "leads to a better understanding of the situation" (Walliman: 2011, p. 128), thus, it is helpful in pointing out possible solutions to a problem. Qualitative data analysis is commonly used when people are the focus of the study and, contrary to quantitative data analysis where data is presented in numbers, qualitative data analysis deals with descriptions, accounts, opinions and feelings presenting these with words. The information provided needs to be coded, which can represent a challenge as the researcher is required to "review, select, interpret and summarize the information without distorting it […] one important consideration when devising codes is to ensure that they are discrete and unambiguous" (Walliman: 2011, p. 133). Coding in this case study was mostly used for the analysis of open questions such as reasons for raising a

child bilingually, effects of HLE program etc. The theory presented previous chapters formed the basis used for coding. Finally the mixture of both analysis seemed ideal for this case study as quantitative data analysis deals with "how" and qualitative data analyses deals with the "why", both questions characterize a case study research strategy as already discussed (Yin: 1994).

The results will be presented and discussed in the next sections.

5.3   Results

5.3.1   Parents' Background

90.5% of all questionnaires were answered by female candidates, only 9.5% were male. On average the parents who took part in the case study have resided in Austria for thirteen and a half years. The minimum period of residency reported was one year and the maximum was thirty years. This is particularly relevant, as results show that the longer the period of residency the stronger the likelihood of shifting to the majority language. The reported level of education was considerably high, 47.6% reported having a college or university degree, 33.3% have a secondary school certificate and 19.0% have completed primary school – and here it is important to point out that primary school education in most Latin American countries represents the equivalent of Austria's primary school and middle school as it lasts eight years.

Although candidates seem to display various levels of multilingualism (knowledge of eight different languages was reported) concerning the reported proficiency level in the dominant language (German) more than 57.0% reported that their proficiency level was B1 or inferior. It is important to highlight that the proficiency levels are based on self-reporting rather than specific criteria set out in the study. However, this is particularly relevant because when shift to the dominant language occurs, parents whose proficiency level in the dominant language is

low will be exposing their child to a non-standard variety of the dominant language. As discussed in chapter four, when the acquisition of HL has not been completed and shift to majority language takes place, the lack of adequate command of the dominant language will likely affect the child negatively when it comes to academic performance.

5.3.2 Reasons and Motivation

All parents responded that they consider it important to raise their children bilingually. Except for two children who were raised bilingually up to when they were approximately seven years old a (their bilingual upbringing was discontinued for socio-emotional reasons) and can now be considered as passive bilinguals, all other sixty three children are reportedly being currently raised bilingually. The great majority, that is 76.9%, are simultaneous bilinguals having acquired both languages from birth. The rest are additive bilinguals with 10% having acquired the second language after the age of five and a very small minority became bilingual between the ages of one to two or between three and four.

The questions on why bilingual education is important and why are parents actually raising their children bilingually were open ended. Answers were not mutually exclusive and could be characterized into three main groups: cognitive, socio-emotional and economic. 90.5% responded that bilingual education is important due to socio-emotional reasons. By contrast, 52.4% perceive economic advantages as a product of a bilingual education. Only 38.1% acknowledge the many cognitive benefits. Concerning why candidates are actively raising their children bilingually, 100% are doing so for socio-emotional reasons, 33.3% in order to achieve economic betterment and a minority of 23.8% replied that the cognitive advantages are also a target.

The answers that fitted the cognitive category were: facility in acquiring a language in childhood and in learning further languages, and an increase in intellectual competence.

Moreover, the reported socio-emotional reasons were: contact with and connection to the roots and heritage culture, possibility of communication with family and relatives in the heritage country, possibility of parent-child communicating in the language "of the heart", more tolerance, greater emotional competence, improvement in interpersonal relations and the appreciation of differences and diversity, because it strengthens tolerance and respect for different ways of seeing and perceiving the world etc. Finally, economic reasons had mainly to do with better professional prospects and a better future.

The results shown here provide undisputable evidence that HL transmission and bilingualism in general are considered important for these families, and some level of effort to achieve this goal is also detectable within both languages' minorities studied here. However, awareness related to the most important benefits, namely those of cognitive nature that depend on a greater level of balance between HL and dominant language is largely absent. Although parents expressed their desire for their children to have and keep a connection with their heritage background, results show, however, that not a single parent regards HL acquisition and maintenance as their children's right or entitlement. In this sense there is also room for work on empowerment.

5.3.3   Approaches to Bilingual Education

Two questions aided in assessing which approach parents use in raising their children bilingually: parents had to indicate which language different people use to speak to their children on a daily basis (see fig. no. 1), and how they react when their children rebel against using the HL. 58.5% replied that the mother always uses the HL and 18.5% of all fathers always use the HL while 72.3% indicated that the father always uses the majority language with the children. For this particular group a rather clear OPOL approach could be detected.

For the rest a MLP approach could be detected. None of the candidates indicated that they use a ML@H approach.

Regarding rebellion which is common when schooling starts, despite the majority having reported using an OPOL approach 64.6% reported that their children started rebelling against the HL after starting schooling in the majority language. This confirms the initial assumption that school initiation is a critical stage for the maintenance of the HL. Considering that the acquisition of the HL is not yet completed at his stage, once schooling in the majority language starts, automatically resulting in decreased exposure to the HL, it is only natural for a child to resist using his or her HL. However, if parents do not have a consistent approach to deal with the situation this will result in language shift. Only 27.7% replied they have a clear and consistent approach to deal with their children's resistance towards the HL, namely they insist on using the HL with the child, whereas 33.8% reported using both HL and the majority language, indicating a MLP approach, and 36.9% said they shift to the majority language.

It is interesting to note that the majority of those who replied that no rebellion was noticed are parents of Spanish speaking children who currently attend the HLE program. This confirms Cummins' (2001) assertion that when children are encouraged to live their identities in a school setting this leads to enhanced self-esteem. As a result, academic performance is also affected in a positive manner.

5.3.4 Support, Information and Attitudes

Different questions were asked in concerning the support and information parents receive from the three different pillars proposed in chapter four in the holistic model for balanced bilingualism, namely, the family, the system and the community. Parents were asked how well informed and supported they feel in their efforts to transmit their HL and, as a result, raise their children bilingually.

Two questions concerning the first pillar whether candidates feel supported and understood by their partners or spouses in their efforts to raise their child bilingually, and whether this support and understanding is shown by other Austrian family members or relatives. A majority of 76.2 % of candidates responded affirmatively to the first question and only a minority of 23.8% replied negatively. In contrast support and understanding from other Austrian relatives or other family members 50% of the candidates reported having difficulties with the extended family and not receiving support or understanding. This clearly indicates that these parents are under pressure to stop using their native language with their children and to shift to the majority language. The negative repercussions have been discussed earlier and should be avoided. It is rather worrying to detect this level of pressure within the home domain, if parents are discouraged from using the HL within their most intimate sphere, what can be expected from other domains?

Additionally, five questions were asked regarding the support and information provided by the system, that is, the school, school authorities, school staff and other professionals. 11.9 % responded that their children had been prohibited from speaking their HL at school. 88.1% in turn reported that this had never been the case; many added however, that their children would have no peers to speak the HL with in a school setting. When asked whether educational, health or social professionals had ever advised or encouraged parents to transmit the HL to their children 59.5 % responded that it has never been the case. By contrast, 33.3 % reported being advised by professionals to stop transmitting the HL to their children. This is rather surprising considering the immense body of literature discussed in chapter three pointing out the many advantages of bilingualism and indicates an urgent need for awareness raising among professionals of many different fields who deal with bilingual children.

Despite the fact that 84.6% participants responded that they were aware that under certain circumstances their children are entitled to state subsidized HL instruction, only 26.2% were

actually informed by school authorities or school staff. In fact, at enrolment only 41.5% were asked if their children spoke another language at home besides German and only 35.4% were actually asked whether they would be interested in enrolling their children in HL tuitions. There seems to be an overall lack of awareness concerning the fact that HL transmission and maintenance are basic human rights. Moreover, it confirms the previously expressed concern that the recruitment for HLE program is not seen as a priority by many school authorities, and its strategies need to be improved if the program is to reach out to as many children as possible.

The community, by contrast, seems to play a significant role when it comes to offering support, advice or general information. 54.8% reported turning to the community for help when challenges or doubts occur regarding the bilingual education of their children, and 44.6% claimed they were informed through the community about their children's entitlement to HL instruction, as well as to the conditions under which the program takes place. By contrast, those who were informed by the school authorities make up 26.2% of all interviewed and are those whose children are already in the program. This confirms the notion presented in chapter four that when the system fails to cater adequately for its minority population and, as a result, their rights are not adequately met, the community may play a crucial role in raising awareness on both sides and in empowering its members.

Concerning attitudes towards the HL, the answers given were rather ambivalent. On the one hand, both the system pillar and the community pillar seem to contribute to creating positive attitudes; a good example is the HLE program, which despite its reported weaknesses, seems to counteract rebellion and aversion towards the HL as the results for the Spanish speaking community show. And yet the results show that some professionals still recommend that families stop using the HL with their children and that more than half of all participants in the study group face difficulties with the extended family and relatives in Austria and lack their

understanding and support when trying to transmit the HL to their children. In two extreme cases parents have reported they were even forbidden by their partners to transmit the HL to their children. Both parents reported a noticeable level of alienation and difficulties in their relationship with their children. Thus, while positive attitudes alone are not enough to achieve greater language proficiency, negative attitudes certainly correlate with language shift. Some possible reasons to explain this kind of conflict will be discussed in chapter six.

5.3.5 Exposure to the HL

While 92.9% of candidates reported that they feel they try to offer adequate exposure to the HL in terms of quality and of quantity, and 69% reported that they feel they are well prepared and informed to transmit the HL to their children, only 31.0% have the means to visit the heritage country or any other country where the HL is spoken once a year, 42.9 % visit the heritage country or any other country where the HL is spoken only once every two years, and 21.4% have no means at all. When it comes to receiving family or relatives from the heritage country 16.7% reported receiving guests every two years, 19.0 % once a year while 64.3% do not receive any visitors from the heritage country at all. This points to a rather limited exposure to the HL which, as a result, correlates with language shift.

Candidates can be divided into three groups when it comes to exposure to the HL: those whose children rely exclusively on the exposure within the family context, those whose children are exposed to the HL within the family context and within a school setting (participants of HLE program) and those whose children are exposed to the HL in a community setting in addition to the family context. Parallel exposure within the context of all three pillars proposed in the holistic model could not be detected at this stage. Candidates are either exposed to the HL within the family, within the family and the community or within the

family and the HLE program. This reveals that the cooperation among the three pillars proposed in the holistic model for balanced bilingualism needs to be strengthened.

30.8% of all children involved in the case study, all Spanish speakers, take part in the Austrian HLE program. Of those 69.2% candidates whose children do not participate in the HLE, 58% replied that HL tuition is currently not available in their language and it is important to note that for those few parents who were asked whether they would be interested in enrolling their children in the HLE program, the justification for its current unavailability in Portuguese was that school authorities claim there are not enough candidates to establish a class. Results show that although there are enough children to start at least two different level classes of HLE tuitions for Portuguese speaking children in Tirol, school authorities have failed so far to acknowledge and act upon this reality.

Additionally, the suspicion raised in chapter two concerning school authorities not having an exact census on the actual number of HL speakers in Austria was proved right in this case study, 58.9% responded that they were not asked upon enrolment whether their children spoke a HL or not. This leads one to assume, that the census is often carried out using unscientific criteria such as physical appearance, the presence or absence of an accent etc. There is some evidence of a functioning HLE program for the Spanish speaking individuals in the study group, however this study shows that the outreach work is fragile for both language minorities and it seems that in most cases it was through the efforts of the community that families were informed about their children's entitlement to the HLE program.

Moreover, 7.7% replied their children took part in Spanish HL tuition in the past dropped out due to problems related to a lack of rapport with the teacher and/or difficulties related to being placed in a multi-level class. Their motivation suffered as a result. Additionally, 10.8% stopped attending for organizational issues related (the HL tuitions either clashed with other

important activities or the parent had no means of taking the child to class due to time or distance constraints). All candidates whose children currently to not have the possibility to attend HL tuition, regardless of reasons, replied that they would certainly enrol their children should they have the opportunity to do so. This information points to the fact that although there is a HLE program, there is room for improvement on many levels: outreach work, quality control, retention rates and revision of the pre-conditions for setting up a class.

When asked about the HL exposure within the community, 40.0% replied there are no community-based cultural projects that promote the HL in their region. From the remaining 60.0% who replied that they are aware of community-based cultural projects that promote the HL in their region, 20.0% have not participated actively so far, 26.1% participates regularly, 3.2% sometimes and 10.7% only seldom.

In cases where candidates were asked in case their children took part in HL tuition and/or in community-based cultural activities, they were asked whether their participation had had any impact in their linguistic habits and in what respect. Of those whose children attend the HLE program, 45.0% replied that despite being offered for only a limited amount of hours a week (two hours) the participation in HL tuition has had a positive impact in their children's motivation. 70.0% noticed positive outcomes. 20.0% replied that the participation in the HLE program has led their children to have more interest in the HL or has led them to identify more with their HL and cultural background. 25.0% observed that their children have become sociable and less resistant towards the HL and culture, this is reportedly a direct result of the HLE program and 40.0% said their children have become more communicative. Concerning language awareness, only 5.0% replied that positive differences were noticed. Only 10.0% replied that no significant changes have been noticed so far. This leads one to conclude that while these two hour weekly sessions have a positive impact on a social level, on a linguistic level they are still not sufficient to produce dramatic changes. Naturally these answers are

based on subjective perception and further studies would have to be carried out over a longer period of time to detect verifiable changes.

By contrast, 53.85% of those who participate in community-based HL maintenance activities replied that it has had an impact on the family's overall identification with the HL and their roots, and that it has positively affected their interest in their ancestry. For 38.46% taking part in community-based activities has raised their awareness on issues related to language transmission and maintenance and their importance. While on the one hand 23.08% replied that community-based HL maintenance efforts were also an important source of information for bilingual education, on the other hand 26.92% observed that participation on such activities increased their sense of empowerment in their efforts to raise or to restart raising their children bilingually. 30.77% felt that the active participation in community-based activities had a positive impact in their motivation and 11.54% felt encouraged in their efforts to raise their children bilingually. 38.46% reported that their children became more communicative and interested in the HL through participation in such activities. Only 23.08% replied that they have noticed no significant changes so far. All added. However, that their participation has been too recent for effects to be noticed. While the changes reported here have mostly to do with the parent's attitudes and overall situation, and further studies would have to be carried out to establish to what degree participation in community-based activities affect children, one can assume that if active participation affects parents positively, this effect will be ultimately noticed in their children. If parents feel encouraged and empowered to use the HL through community-based activities then one can assume that by putting this into practice, positive results will be seen in their children. In the next section the actual level of language exposure and use will be presented.

5.3.6 Reported Level of Language Exposure and Use

When it comes to the HL language, it becomes evident in the study that a single parent is often the major source of language exposure and transmission, and in the majority of cases this is the mother. Grandparents and other relatives (who in most cases live abroad) come next. However, it was not possible to detect whether contact with extended family members does actually happen on a daily basis. Hardly any other sources of HL transmission on a daily basis were reported. The data provided for the question "Which language does your child use to communicate with the following people on a daily basis?" indicates a clear dominance of the majority language. Additionally, the actual reported language use shows that except for family meals, where there seems to be a balance between HL use and majority language use, answers given for all other activities show a clear indication of language shift from the HL to the majority language. Thus, a lack of adequate exposure to the HL seems to be a real issue for both minorities studied here. Except for two children who have just recently moved to Austria and seem to currently keep both HL and dominant language use balanced, language shift is already evident. All pillars (family, system and society) need to be individually strengthened but above all mutual and parallel cooperation among them needs to be enhanced and improved if we are to reverse language shift for these minorities. Figure 4, 5 and 6 show the actual level of language exposure and use reported by parents.
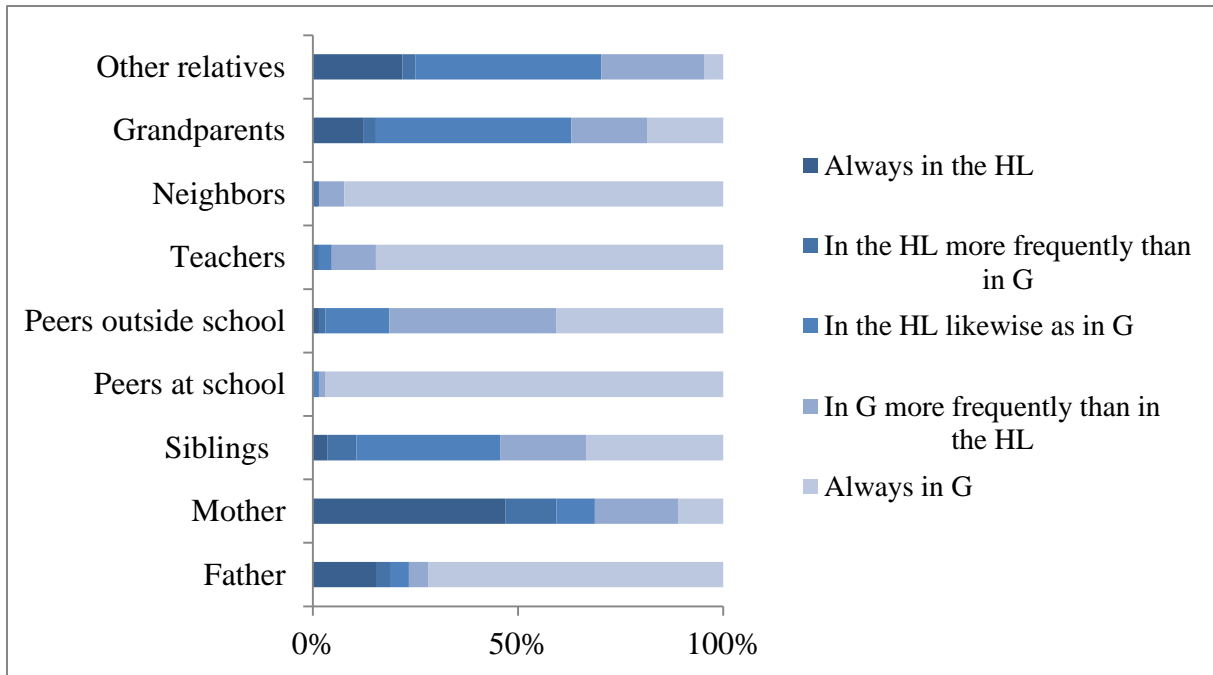
Figure 4: Language used by the child to communicate with different people on a daily basis.

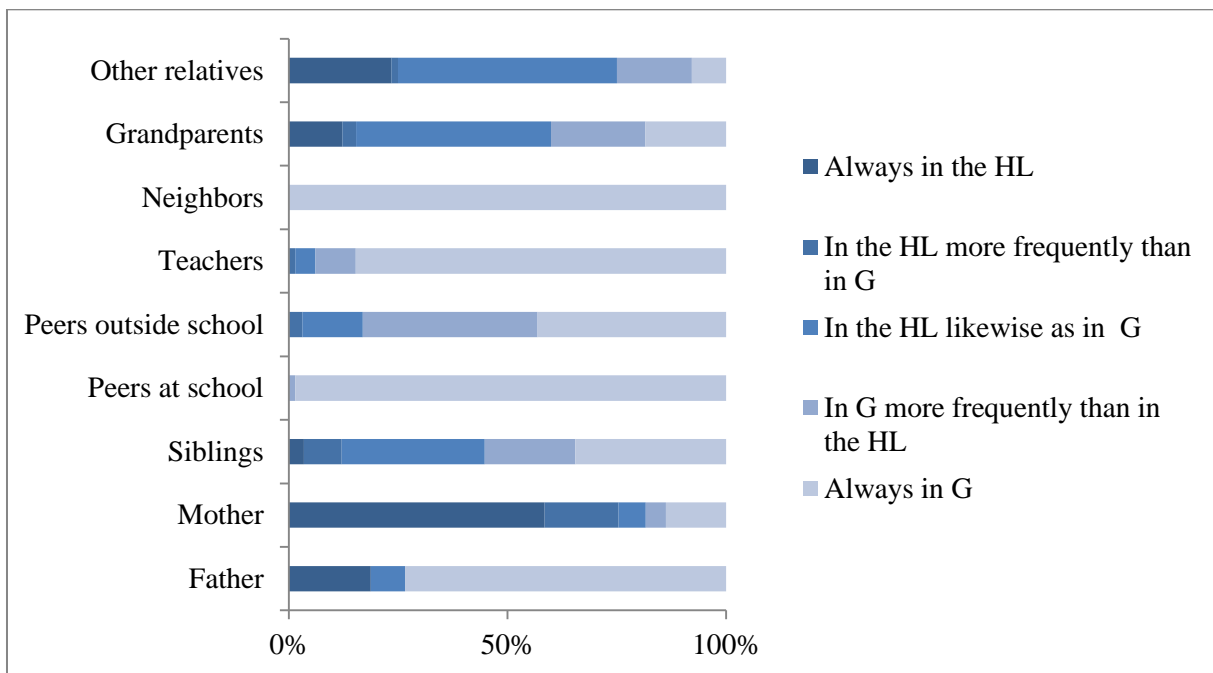HL= Heritage Language (Portuguese/Spanish), G= German

Figure 5: Languages used by different people to communicate with the child on a daily basis.

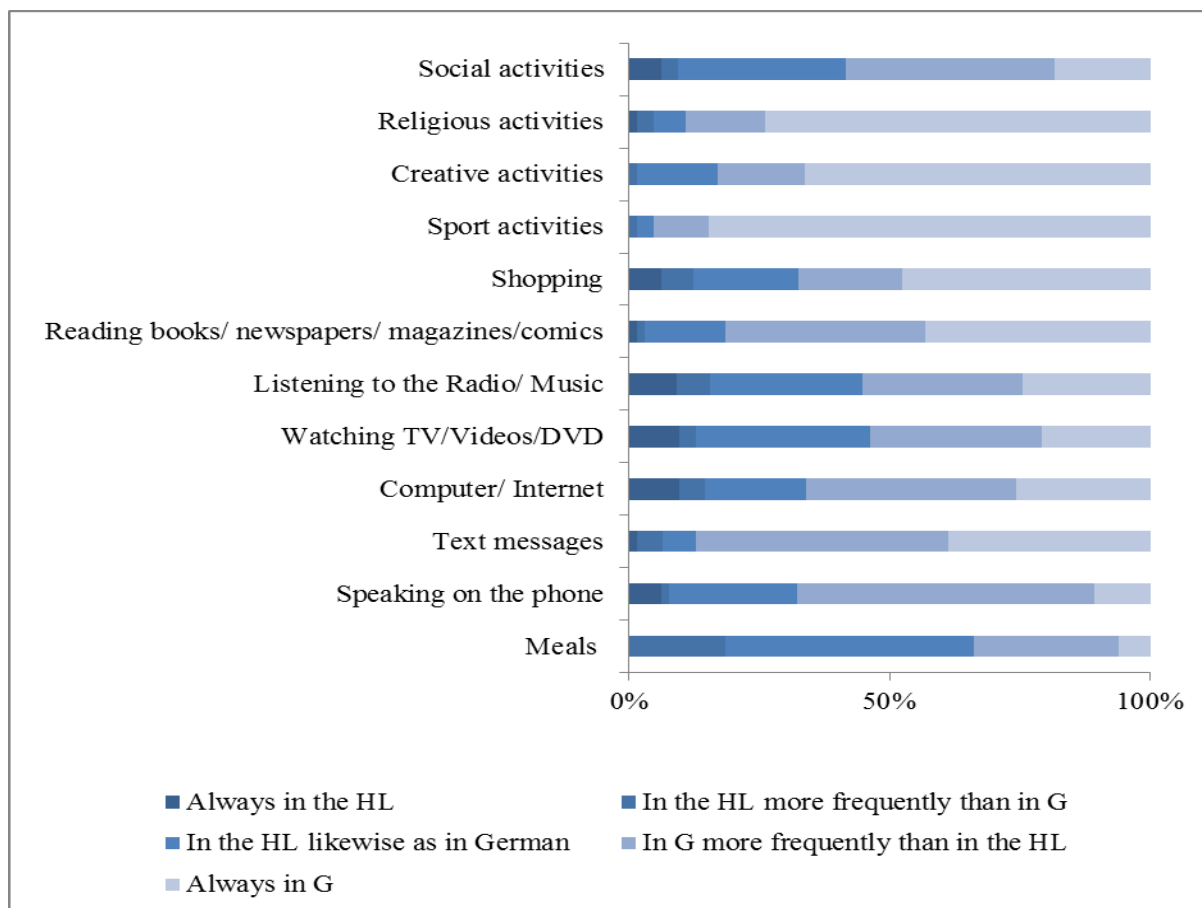HL= Heritage Language (Portuguese/Spanish), G= German

Figure 6: Languages used by the child use to perform different tasks on a daily basis.

 HL= Heritage Language (Portuguese/Spanish), G= German

It became evident that much of the language transmission and acquisition take place in the home domain but as previously discussed, this is not enough to guarantee the full development of a HL and a single person being responsible for the transmission of the HL is insufficient to provide the child with enough language exposure and experience. As a result, the language experiences he or she has at home are often only limited to daily events around home life and, consequently, the HL cannot develop to its full potential when exposure is poor. Figure 3 portrays this situation well.

The results of this case study lead to the worrying conclusion that parents seem to be in a fragile position in their efforts to transmit the HL to their children as they often find

themselves in conflicting situations and have to justify their choices. As a result, not only are indications of language shift rather strong, but if the HL speaking parent proficiency in the majority language is not adequate and this individual shifts to the majority language, he or she is exposing his or her children to a poor, non-standard variety of the majority language. As previously discussed, this might have detrimental effects on the child's academic performance. Above all, when the majority language enters into competition with the minority language in the most intimate spheres of family life, family cohesion is endangered.

In the next chapter possible causes for negative attitudes towards HLs and their effect on political and academic discourse as well as their impact on individual choices will be presented and discussed.

6 The Elephant in the Room – Migration and Xenophobia

6.1 Austria, a Migration Country that Refuses to Be So

Individuals stop using or transmitting their HL and shift to a majority language for different reasons which range from lack of opportunities to use the HL to societal pressure and fear that they may be marginalized or even attract xenophobic reactions when choosing to keep their HL. In order to understand this problematic, one has to analyse and discuss each case individually but more importantly, one has to also place these individuals in the context where they live. As Baker (2011, p. 397) has argued "the political debate over assimilation and pluralism is fundamental to understanding language minorities". It can be argued that the status of HLE goes hand in hand with the status of migration, thus, in order to understand the situation of HLE in any given context one has to understand the situation of migrants as well.

One needs to take a glance at some national newspapers and other news venues in Austria to notice that the national discourse towards migrants is often charged with animosity. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Austria does not understand itself as a migration country, it has been undoubtedly so many decades, if not centuries. People from different nationalities have settle here, an example from recent years is the migration of the so called "Gastarbeiter" or guest workers originating mainly from Turkey and the former Yugoslavia who were invited to come to Austria in the sixties through the Raab-Olah treaty. In 1963 there were 21.000 guest workers in Austria, a decade later 227.000.[14] Initially their presence was well seen and they were generally welcomed in the country as "Austrians increasingly found employment in the service sector, the remaining jobs in the production sector were occupied by unskilled immigrant workers" (Böse et al.: 2001, p.2). Their contribution to the economy was perceived

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[14] http://diepresse.com/home/panorama/integration/708980/50-Jahre-Gastarbeiter-in-Osterreich

as indispensable and therefore, they were initially appreciated by the Austrian population in general.

However, soon perception and attitudes towards these guest workers began to change[15] turning the population's initial enthusiasm into resentment and initiating problems which still haunt the Austrian political scenario, and, more than fifty years later remain unsolved. Although these migrants initially only intended to stay here for a limited period of time, most never returned to their countries of birth, they were joined by their families and, ultimately, became Austrian citizens. Böse et al. (2001, p.3) note how this period had a profound impact in Austria turning it into an actual immigration country despite this not being Austria's official self-understanding and how "the political discourse held on to notions of "Zuwanderung", thus emphasizing the transitory state of immigration, as opposed to "Einwanderung", which implies settlement."

By contrast, the most recent waves of migration have different causes than the one in the sixties, but present a similar number of migrants, namely asylum seekers coming from war or conflict zones in Africa, in Iraq and Afghanistan and predominantly in Syria. According to statistics from the Austrian Interior Ministry between the years of 2013 and 2015 more than one hundred and twenty thousand applications for asylum were made.[16] Although there is, politically speaking, some attempt to prevent these asylum seekers from coming to Austria, as long as conflict and extreme poverty remain unresolved in these areas, the likelihood that this kind of migration will end overnight is unrealistic.

When the latest refugee crises reached a dramatic point in late summer 2015, similar reactions to the ones that were present in the population in the sixties were seen in the population again.

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[15] http://derstandard.at/1323222571065/Geschichte-der-Gastarbeiter-Alles-kam-anders

[16] http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI_Asylwesen/statistik/start.aspx

Although refugees were arriving in Austria for very different reasons than the guest workers back in the sixties, empathy towards their plight was perceptible, their reception was favourable as the wave of positivity and solidarity in the general population broke out: The civil society joined hands and acted where the political forces had failed, working ceaselessly and voluntarily to welcome, aid and accommodate thousands of refugees that turned up overnight at the Austrian borders. However, soon numbers became overwhelming; and when other European countries shunned their own share of responsibility over this international crises, results were seen in the form of emergence of tiredness, frustration and resentment towards the newcomers and of anxiety over the future of the nation in the general population.

This, in turn, has an inevitable impact in the national political discourse, and instead of focusing on establishing strong migration politics and healthy integration strategies (the kind that do not only focus on conveying the local culture, traditions and values but that also reconcile these with the migrants' right to maintain his or her language, culture and identity), the current discussion focuses on hosting asylum seekers on a temporary basis only, avoiding any thorough investment in their integration process. It seems that this temporary nature of things is the very basis of the problem and this seems to be based on a lack of understanding or acknowledgment that Austria is indeed an immigration country and has been so for a while. Additionally, instead of viewing migration as a whole as a challenging but positive phenomenon, it is generally perceived as a threat. As a result, policies that promote integration and parallel respect, value and even promote diversity are weak and inefficient. Consequently, this affects many aspects, ultimately education policies and it seems to reflect on individual and societal attitudes towards multilingualism and culture diversity. Even though the studied population here is not composed of asylum seekers and the individuals in the case study and the individuals in the case study have not apparently come here due to economic reasons (almost all candidates came to Austria through marriage), they are

nevertheless affected by the status quo or migrant and language policies and the result thereof is a visible language shift in progress.

6.2 How the National Discourse Affects HLE on a Political and Academic Level

One could ask why despite the world wide growing interest in HLE as a field of research, it has hardly had any impact in the Austrian context and why has the term not found due attention in Austria? There are a number of possible explanations, among others, the fact that there is indeed a HLE program but its existence is hardly discussed openly or even propagated. Another issue is that even after decades of migration Austria still fails to see and define itself as a migration country, and as a result, Austria fails to cater adequately for the needs of its migrant population, particularly concerning HLE. As argued by Cummins (1991)

> A number of countries promote overtly racist policies in relation to immigrant and culturally diverse communities. Other political parties and groups adopt a somewhat more enlightened orientation and search for ways to "solve the problem" of diverse communities and their integration in schools and society. However, they still define the presence of diverse communities as a "problem" and see few positive consequences for the host society. They worry that linguistic, cultural, "racial" and religious diversity threaten the identity of the host society. Consequently, they promote educational policies that will make the "problem" disappear.

Indeed Austria seems to find itself in a rather ambivalent position. As Baker (2011, p. 390) points out "Politicians, policy-makers and the public have varying agendas about languages. Some wish to assimilate different language groups to a homogenous society of monolinguals; others are keen to retain linguistic diversity and pluralism".

While Austria's policies for HLE can be considered rather progressive, the fact that just over one tenth of all HL speakers profit from it, speaks of a failure in the execution of such policies. As the results of the case study presented here show clearly that the information and outreach work is faulty. One can only speculate the underlying reasons but as the results of

the case study show, not only parents but some professionals and even school authorities lack awareness that HL transmission and maintenance are basic human rights. This is not surprising considering that the national discourse is often characterized by, at least up to a certain point, hostility and intolerance towards immigrant communities. Thus, while language policies are progressive, there are actual attempts to hinder HLE and HL use on a micro level within the family context, and on a macro level these attempts stem from politicians.

A good example of this sort of hostility and intolerance based attempt to hinder children to use their HL is the recent debate in Upper Austria after the Freedom Party (FPÖ), a political party well known for its extreme right views, gained the majority of votes in the regional elections in summer 2015. As a result, some of its first proposed policies were characterized by a hard course as far as the integration process of the migrant population is concerned. The proposed policy in short: benefits should only be given out to citizens "willing" to integrate, and as far as FPÖ is concerned, integration should be translated with total denial of one's cultural identity and full assimilation into mainstream Austria. Furthermore, the party proposed that German should be used exclusively in a school setting, prohibiting migrant children to speak their heritage language even during breaks[17].

Such notions seem to be based on a great amount of ethnocentrism and lack of sensibility. Moreover, they ignore the fact that this kind of prohibition hinders learning processes, since children learn from one another. When minority children are allowed to communicate with each other in their heritage language it does not slow down the acquisition of the majority language, on the contrary, it is an indispensable tool in the acquisition process (Cillia: 2013).

The above mentioned controversial FPÖ proposal has led to a debate which prompted the education minister, Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek, to react and point out that this policy is not only

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[17] http://derstandard.at/2000024332060/Schwarz-Blau-fix-Fuer-Puehringer-nur-Arbeitsuebereinkommen

inadmissible but also illegal as it goes against the European Convention on Human Rights[18].
While the minister's reaction seems to be adequate, the national political scenario seems to
be, on the one hand, caught in a constant trap in its attempts to be a modern democracy that
recognizes and legitimizes the rights of its migrant population. On the other hand, Austria
finds itself in an awkward position as a nation that has to pacify the growing voices that
sympathize with and support the ideas of this notorious right populist political party.

Additionally, what seemed to be at first only a regional discussion soon spread to other
regions, in particular at the face of the recent refugee crises and the current presidential
elections in Austria. The Tiroler Tageszeitung, the most well-known newspaper in Tirol,
recently reported about a polemic discussion in the region, after the city council of Wörgl
(governed by the FPÖ) demanded via the local school authorities that German should be the
only language spoken in the educational domain, even during breaks. This "information" was
sent to parents of children from minorities in an email.[19] It is interesting to note that even
though the city council is not supposed to interfere with the rules dictated by an educational
institution, when it comes to language policy especially the above mentioned party seems to
be prepared to go that extra mile even if the results may affect the school's autonomy.

Naturally not all Austrian citizens are in favour of such restrictive policies and are rather pro a
more diverse Austria. In article published in Der Standard Wolfgang Haas, a school director
from Upper Austria, expressed his indignation at the face of this proposed policy, indicating
that not only it is "absolutely nonsense" and that such policy has "no integrative benefit", but

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[18] http://derstandard.at/2000024407027/Ministerium-Deutschpflicht-in-Pause-unzulaessig

[19] http://www.tt.com/politik/landespolitik/11056762-91/deutschpflicht-in-der-pause-in-w%C3%B6rgl-
umstritten.csp

that it is impracticable. For him this kind of cognitive plainness is shocking[20]. Regarding the discussion in Wörgl there was also an indignant reaction from Beate Palfrader, the regional minister of education, who has stated that "We should stop to constantly give schools recommendations […] they know best what they need […] and we should not forget that there is a great potential in cultural diversity [...] we must stop discriminating these people.[21]"

This debate between those who are pro assimilation and those who are pro a pluralistic Austrian society may seem absurd and outdated to some considering that we live in a globalized and multilingual world, indeed most countries are multilingual and multicultural (it is rare to find monolinguals and monolingual situations nowadays). It is, nevertheless, helpful in understanding the situation of migrants and their respective minority languages in Austria. As Jessner (2008) has argued "from a European perspective though, the application of monolingual norms to multilingual contexts is still predominant, despite the efforts of the European Union to foster plurilingualism or individual multilingualism."

In a context where minorities are prescribed which language choices they should make children are the ones most affected "bilingual children end up in the cross fire of policy makers" (Cummins: 2001). Indeed , this kind of debate not only effects the political discourse and policy making processes but it also has an effect on the linguistic and cultural identities and, indeed, choices of migrants who are often caught between these two very different schools of thought. There is often, conscious or unconscious, pressure made upon migrants to learn the dominant language (in this case German) as quick as possible, to avoid using their

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[20] http://derstandard.at/2000024811730/Deutschpflicht-in-der-PauseDie-kognitive-Schlichtheit-der-Politik-schockiert

[21] http://www.tt.com/politik/landespolitik/11056762-91/deutschpflicht-in-der-pause-in-w%C3%B6rgl-umstritten.csp

native language, in order to "integrate" themselves. This pressure leads some individuals to give in to the point that they may even wish to assimilate and stop speaking their native language to their children, resulting in language, culture and identity shift and perhaps even loss for the individuals involved. Fishman (2004, p. 414) who conducted remarkable work on reversing language shift stresses how policies that promote the use of the dominant language exclusively "foster suspicion, divisiveness, and recriminations that discourage individuals and businesses from public use of languages" have an impact in the intergenerational transmission of a language as a whole.

In order to highlight how this problematic seems to reflect on various aspects and different sectors within Austrian society, it is perhaps useful to point out that most future teachers go throughout their studies and training without ever hearing that in Austria HL speakers are entitled to a minimum amount of formal education in their HL. Despite its relevance, the topic just does not seem to have found its due place in the teacher training curriculum nor in the academic discussion. If this kind of awareness is not present in academic and educational institutions, how are we to expect that teachers encourage and support the language development of minority children on a daily basis? Additionally, as demonstrated in the case study, many migrant families are not aware nor are they being actively informed by the school authorities that their children are entitled to a minimal amount, nevertheless, formal and state subsidized education in their HL. Especially those families who belong to smaller and less visible and less proactive ethnolinguistic communities seem to be the one to be left out of national efforts to promote HLE.

Therefore, while progressive language policies that protect language minorities do exist in Austria, there seems to be a failure in the system in executing these policies. The public discourse is characterized by ambivalent and even assimilationist tendencies that encourage and puts pressure on minorities to adopt the mainstream language, in this case German, and

the mainstream culture as their own. Fishman (2004, p. 415) argues that whatever rationales are in place concerning multilingualism "they must be fully and consensually verbalized, strikingly ideologized, organizationally implemented and frequently reiterated" in order for the mainstream society to support them and be prepared to carry their costs and benefits.

One can argue here that where there is a welcoming and tolerant attitude towards migrants (regardless of their background and reasons that lead them to migrate), combined with efforts that encourage and promote cultural diversity that this will lead a nation, a community and lastly, a family to strive to establish strong and continuous HLE programs for their children. In a context where the contrary is the case, then language loss, culture uniformity and intolerance to differences and loss of identity may become apparent.

6.3   Language Prestige and Considerations for the Future

Issues of prestige and attitudes towards bilingualism or multilingualism in general also seem to play an important role when it comes to HLE in Austria as argued here

> Whereas a Croatian family now living in Austria will most probably meet problems with maintenance of Croatian in the family, a French family might find it much easier to maintain the family language in the same context. Whereas French is still considered by many people to be part of èlite multilingualism in Austria, Croatian certainly is not so, meaning that the younger generation will opt for the language shift in the Croatian family" (Jessner: 2008, p. 28).

If prestige and attitudes towards bilingualism and multilingualism influence language choices on an individual level and also on a societal level, it can be assumed that positive attitudes towards minority languages are also a direct reflection of linguistic policies that recognize the value and importance of promoting protection and maintenance of minority languages. However, it is not enough to have progressive language policies; the results of this case study point out to the urgent need of a radical nationwide campaign that promotes cultural diversity

and awareness regarding the rights of minorities. Additionally, urgent nation-wide awareness needs to be raised of the many benefits associated with bilingualism and regarding HLE as a right in different areas of society (educational, health and social and on a community level). In particular school authorities and staff need to be reminded of their responsibility to inform parents about their children's entitlement to HLE. School authorities need to do everything in their power in order to guarantee that minority children's right are being met. Awareness also needs to be raised regarding the detrimental effects of language shift on an individual level and the resulting identity loss and loss of family cohesion. But also the loss on a much larger scale, namely the loss of valuable human resources for a society that does not fully promote, support and cater adequately for the full development of HLs.

Moreover, preconditions for setting up HL tuitions need to be revisited; it cannot be that children are hindered from receiving formal HLE because one or two children are missing from the pre-established minimum of twelve. Some regions already show some flexibility in this respect, as it it's the case of Vorarlberg, there classes can be set up even when the group is short of one-two students.

All in all, the results of the case study lead one to conclude that all three pillars - family, system and community - need to be individually strengthened. As Cummins (2001, p. 3) has argued

> The destruction of language and culture in schools is also highly counter-productive for the host society itself. In an era of globalization, a society that has access to multilingual and multicultural resources is advantaged in its ability to play an important social and economic role on the world stage. At a time when cross-cultural contact is at an all-time high in human history, the identities of all societies are evolving. The identities of societies and ethnic groups have never been static and it is a

naive illusion to believe that they can become static-fixed as monochrome and monocultural museum exhibits for posterity--when the pace of global change is as rapid as it is today.[…] the challenge for educators and policy-makers is to shape the evolution of national identity in such a way that the rights of all citizens (including school children) are respected, and the cultural, linguistic, and economic resources of the nation are maximized

In this sense, a stronger cooperation between families, the system and communities should be aimed for if we are create more favourable conditions that encourage HL transmission and maintenance efforts, promote balanced bilingualism and prevent language shift for HL speakers in Austria. Knowing that bilingualism gives children the option of an identity that is based in and fostered through the cultures of both the family and the school rather than an identity in which the family's inferiority is interlaced with the internalization of the majority language (Cummins: 1991), the relationship of power and competition between HL and majority language is outdated and unnecessary. However, since old habits die hard, perhaps positive attitudes to HLs can only be achieved on a larger scale if Austria begins to perceive itself and act as a migration society that accepts and legitimizes and respects the rights of all its citizens.

7   Conclusion

It has been argued here that the ownership of more than one language is a complex phenomenon and needs to be handled as such. Some of its complexities and nuances have been elucidated and discussed. Among others: differences between mother language and heritage language, differences between foreign language learner and heritage language owner, stages of language acquisition of both languages, different kinds of bilinguals and the phenomenon of language shift.

Additionally, the origins and the development of Heritage Language Education as a field of research were presented. Its situation worldwide was compared to the its current status in Austria and it can be concluded that despite growing interest and investment in Heritage Language Education as a field of research throughout the world, it has hardly had any impact in the Austrian academic context. It has been demonstrated here that at least twenty percent of all students attending the Austrian school system are speaker of a heritage language. Moreover, it has been argued that, Austria has very progressive language policies which, under certain conditions, guarantee children of ethnolinguistic minorities the right to formal education in their heritage language. Nevertheless only a small minority of children make use of their right to formal heritage language education. In particular less visible language minorities seem to be the ones left out of national efforts to promoted heritage language education in Austria.

Some reasons that explain this situation were brought forward: Issues of organizational nature such as difficulties in finding suitable candidates to conduct heritage language instruction, in particular for less commonly spoken languages. Issues related to the retention of students who end up demotivated when their individual needs are not met in a multi-level class. There are also constraints in relation to the pre-established condition of having a minimum of twelve

children in order to set up a class. Other issues of organization such as heritage language instruction clashing with other obligations students or their parents have which unable individuals to participate in heritage language tuitions. Above all, a weak and faulty outreach work seems to be the driving force behind the low numbers of students participating in the Austrian heritage language program.

Additionally, it was discussed that the perception and handling of heritage language education goes hand in hand with the perception and handling of migration as a whole. Based on Austrian media reports, it was demonstrated here how the national and public discourse regarding to migration is often charged with animosity towards minorities and how public discourse is characterized by ambivalent and even assimilationist tendencies that encourage and puts pressure on minorities to adopt the mainstream language. This reality affects not only language policies but especially individuals who in some extreme cases abandon their heritage language for good, fearing that the act of maintaining their heritage language could place them in a marginalized position and hinder their efforts to get ahead in the mainstream society.

Balanced bilingualism has been proposed here as a feasible alternative to combat or reverse language shift. Despite the fact that many experts have argued that balanced bilingualism is a myth, it was argued here that in particularly in case of bilingualism that is concomitant with heritage languages, it is an achievable goal if conditions that promote its existence are created. The first proposed condition is the awareness of the many advantages related to bilingualism, especially those of cognitive nature that depend heavily on the degree of balance between both languages. Secondly, in order to promote balanced bilingualism, adequate exposition to both dominant and heritage language needs to be provided. A holistic model for the promotion of balanced bilingualism which is composed of three pillars (family, system and community) and their respective functions was brought forward. Lastly it was argued that

these pillars are inter-dependent and their mutual efforts and cooperation are indispensable in creating adequate language exposure which results in balanced bilingualism.

The results of a case study involving two unnoticed heritage language minorities (Spanish and Portuguese) in the states of Vorarlberg and Tirol were presented and discussed. Its primary goal was to assess in how far ideas and concepts proposed in the holistic model for balanced bilingualism are being practiced and lived by these minorities. Secondly, the case study aimed at finding out in how far language shift is an issue for these communities.

Results showed the out of the sixty-five children investigated; only twenty have access to state organized and subsidized heritage language instruction. It was concluded that the majority of families is aware of their children's entitlement to formal heritage language education, however the ethnolinguistic community is indeed performing what should be the school's duty namely, to inform and recruit minority children for the heritage language maintenance program.

Furthermore, results showed that the level of awareness concerning the advantages of bilingualism is rather high, but awareness related to the cognitive benefits (perhaps the most important ones) is relatively poor in these two communities. Additionally, perception of heritage language transmission, revitalization and transmission as a right could not be detected and needs to be propagated. It was also shown that even though candidates consider bilingual education as important, and there are some detectable efforts to that effect, more than fifty percent struggle with negative attitudes towards the heritage language in their immediate and extended families. For two candidates pressure was such that it led them to discontinue the bilingual education of their children, their report provided evidence how language shift affects family cohesion negatively.

It also became evident that language transmission happens primarily in the home domain for these minorities, and that in most cases it relies on a single person. An evident level of language shift could be detected and needs to be seriously treated. Particularly, considering that a great majority of parents who participated in the case study reported on having an intermediate level of German (B1). Thus, when shifting towards the majority language they are exposing their children to a non-standard variety of German; as a result, this may have negative academic implications for their children in the future.

Even though there were some detectable efforts derived from the system pillar and the community pillar, their efforts are too recent or insufficient to promote dramatic changes yet. On a more positive note, the reported direct effects of HLE were encouraging: those who take part in it do not present signs of aversion or rebellion against their heritage language nor their heritage background. However, it was not possible to find in the case study a single child who benefits from mutual and parallel cooperation among all three pillars (family, system and community), indicating room for improvement in this respect.

Finally, if we as a society are serious about not allowing languages to atrophy, and also serious about plurality, it is not enough to proclaim that multilingualism is a desirable goal. We need to move away from perceiving heritage language maintenance as a problem to seeing language maintenance as a valuable resource. Above all, we need to see and handle heritage language maintenance as a right that needs to be tolerated but as a right that must be promoted, "we must become serious about real cultural democracy and group rights for this purpose" (Fishman: 2004, p. 419).

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9   Annex