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## **The role of the family in heritage language use and learning: impact on heritage language policies**

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We analyze the way children and youngsters perceive the role of family in the use and acquisition of the heritage language (HL), through two complementary means: drawings produced by children and students participating in a discussion forum. Our study reveals: (1) the convergence of perceptions that children and adolescents have about family involvement and its roles in the maintenance of the HL, in terms of affective, cognitive, and interactional support; and (2) the affective, cognitive, and interactional scaffolding family provides for HL development. The analysis guides the proposition of several means of fostering the family's engagement in HL education, going beyond traditional roles and encouraging participative and deliberative actions within the curriculum, the programs, and the classroom.

**Keywords:** heritage language; role of the family; linguistic policy

### **1. Introduction**

Previous research on children's language development in their mother tongue has shown the role intergenerational dialog plays in language acquisition and language use (Kenner et al. 2007), stressing the social nature of language. Those studies, in the tradition of Vygotsky (1985), reveal the weight interaction and negotiation have on producing relevant and highly significant input while acquiring the mother language. More recently, studies related to bilingual and multilingual acquisitions have also demonstrated the role of the family in foreign language learning (Lindgren and Muñoz 2013), as well as in host language and in heritage language (HL) acquisition (Braun 2012; Wilson 2012). Some studies stressed the role of parental influence in the students' perception of linguistic aspects such as importance, utility, and status (Bartram 2006; Braun 2012; Wilson 2012). However, most studies developed so far have mainly underpinned the role of parents in HL use, acquisition, and maintenance or loss, and little has been said about the role of other family members: 'the affective factors of grandparents on language maintenance have attracted (...) little attention' (2012, 423).

Regarding HL, research done so far has confirmed the efforts parents go through in order to create opportunities for language maintenance and use, in schools and within the community (García, Zakharia, and Otcu 2013). Those efforts are related to the perception they have of the social relevance of bilingualism and of bilingual education, its impact on academic and economic achievement, and on the safeguarding of traditions (Tse 2001a,

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2001b). So, the relationship with HL is far more affective and related to identity construction and affirmation (or denial) than to any other language with other status, because of the ‘delocalization of self’ and of the emotions and feelings experienced by the multilingual subject (Kramsch 2009; Pavlenko 2007). In fact, ‘in addition to internal factors such as attitudes, motivation, and social identity, ethnic identity is also a key factor in HL development’ (He 2010, 71). However, in the context of HL, little has been done regarding children’s and youngster’s perceptions of the parents’ efforts, and on the family as ‘HL life-support’.

Other studies have already analyzed the positive and negative affective relationships children and youngsters establish with their HL, surpassing issues related to school success or future professional advantages (Carreira and Kagan 2011; Melo-Pfeifer and Schmidt 2012). However, because studies focusing on children’s perceptions of their heritage are still quite rare, namely because of the difficulties related to data collection, this study aims at providing evidences of the affective (but also cognitive) relationship children develop with the HL through the family.

In the scope of our project ‘Images of Portuguese (Learning) abroad’, we collected data encompassing social representations of parents, teachers, students, and pupils of several ages. Because online enquiries were impossible to apply to children initiating a literacy trajectory (starting to write and to read), we collected 956 drawings from children aged 6–12 years, enrolled in Portuguese HL classes in Germany. In our previous analysis of this corpus, we noticed the frequent graphic and verbal representations of family members portrayed in several communicative contexts. This fact made us aware of the role family plays in the children’s attachment to their HL, but we were unable to portray the complexity of this role. As an extension of this previous project, we developed a task called ‘Fórum de discussão / Discussion forum’, targeting adolescents enrolled also in HL classes in Germany: the regular allusion to family confirmed our perception. In both activities and their instructions, we must add, no reference was made to Portuguese language or to the family: regarding the collection of drawings the instruction was ‘Draw yourself speaking the languages you know’, and regarding the discussion forum, the triggering question was ‘What does it mean to have Portuguese roots, nowadays?’

Following those ‘clues’, we aim at providing evidence of the children’s and youngsters’ representations regarding the role and the values attached to family in HL maintenance and use, as well as a typology of functions family is intended to have in order to support language development and identity dynamics related to that language. In order to do so, we will make a microanalysis of occurrences related to those issues, both in drawings and in discussion forums’ interactions, in order to answer the following research questions:

- Are all relatives depicted or remembered the same way and with the same frequency?
- Which situations are drawn or remembered in both corpora?
- Which roles are assigned to parents, grandparents or other relatives in the use and learning of PHL?

As each group has different age profiles, we will also seek to provide information regarding differences in the way both children and youngsters relate to the HL. We will finish this contribution with the impact these results may have on the design and implementation of HL policies, because, as Th. Ricento stresses, Linguistic Policy ‘is not just an exercise of philosophical enquiry; it is interested in addressing social problems which often involve language (...) and in proposing realistic remedies’ (2006, 11).

## 2. HL use, acquisition, and maintenance: family matters

The concept of HL, as well as other related concepts (sometimes considered synonyms) such as home language (Little 2010), is closely related to the idea of family and, more specifically, to parents. In fact, a heritage, understood as ‘a trait or asset gained through birth’ (King and Ennser-Kananen 2013, 1), is the result of a close connection to a family member, and home is the meeting place of different family members (normally parents and children). However, as we also know, heritage and home can also be understood within a broader perspective, referring to the ‘family background’, including grandparents, uncles and aunties, cousins and so on.

The definition of HL frequently underpins the role of the family (usually the parents) as the first social and interactional *locus* for its acquisition (which indirectly relates the concept to the one of mother tongue, namely in the case of second generation immigrants):

Foreign language educators use the term to refer to a language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English. (Valdés 2001, 38)

In fact, HL is said to be acquired at first within the family circle (parents) and this assumption is seldom disputed, since it seems so evident:

Parents are in many ways gatekeepers to the heritage language: whether parents speak to their children in the native language; the attitudes parents hold about maintenance of the language; whether opportunities are sought out for the child to be exposed to or to formally study the language; and whether parents provide reading materials in the home or model uses of literacy (...); all may have an impact on whether and to what extent the language is retained by children. (Tse 2001a, 37)

Despite this unchallenged evidence, ‘the language may not have been spoken in the home, and the person has no functional proficiency’ (Carreira and Kagan 2011, 41). Furthermore, we claim along with Braun that other family members, particularly grandparents, also play a very important role in HL maintenance: ‘grandparents play an important part in bringing up children with more than one culture and language. Grandparents provide access to a minority language in a natural manner’ (2012, 433). The same claim is present in Carreira, through the discussion of Giangreco’s linguistic autobiography (2004), where grandparents are considered the ‘linguistic roots’ and the ‘connection with the past’ more than the parents. Other family members are rarely studied as providing support for language maintenance and acquisition and Braun reported a less important perceived role regarding aunties, uncles, or cousins. These claims are mainly supported through the literature review and the interviews conducted by the author with trilingual families in England and Germany.

The support of different relatives regarding the acquisition and use of HL is seen as a cohesion sign by the family and it enlarges the social context where the HL can be used: the HL expands its *locus*, from home to a more diverse milieu, thus enriching children’s proficiency and cultural experiences vis-à-vis that language. This support is far more important when a minority language tries to ‘survive’ within a very dominant and powerful linguistic environment and within a monolingual social ideology (García, Zakharia, and Otcu 2013), because it fosters the contact from ‘emergent bilinguals’ (García and Kleifgen 2010) with the commonly weaker and endangered part of their linguistic resources.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the importance those relatives, namely grandparents, play in language maintenance and proficiency when children and youngsters belong to a third immigrant generation (again Carreira 2004). In these situations, as several studies pointed out, families and children usually ‘translanguage’ at home and at school (Hornberger and Link 2012), displaying the marks of a composite linguistic and cultural identity, resorting to a ‘bilingualism without diglossic functional separation’ (García 2007, xiii). Particularly in scenarios where subjects live with many languages, in different countries and may have diverse heritages, translanguaging is considered as a ‘border-crossing communicative practice’ (Hornberger and Link 2012, 263), focused on its processes and achievements rather than on ‘languages-as-we-knew-it’. From this perspective, translanguaging is a ‘communicative tool’ used within the family and in other complex communicative and multilingual scenarios. In such scenarios, parents feel they are not able to provide the full range of linguistic, pragmatic, and communicative resources in the HL and the sense of belonging to a given community: grandparents and other relatives thus become the closest users to a ‘native use’ of that language, especially if they are not ‘delocalized’ family members, being accepted as powerful linguistic resources and full-skilled interlocutors.

Another important role regarding the role of the family in HL language maintenance is underlined by Carreira and Kagan: the way it fosters literacy practices at home. In their survey, 71.3% of the respondents pointed out ‘the benefit of having been read to in their HL by parents or relatives’ (2011, 45).

Without this familial support, HL erosion is said to be quicker, namely when combined with other factors such as:

- family’s representations of linguistic power and prestige of both HL and Host Language (Tse 2001a); we define, in the scope of this contribution, representation as a set of beliefs and common assumptions, sometimes with normative power, regarding languages and linguistic relationships (following from Castellotti and Moore 2002; Cooke and Simpson 2012); Fishman considers that “parents who are insecure about their own ethnic identity are likely to associate that language more with disadvantages than with advantages and, therefore, identify with it less and discontinue using it more often” (2006, 5);
- time of permanence of the family in the host country and its wellbeing (as reported by Carreira and Kagan 2011);
- social linguistic attitudes and representations regarding the languages and cultures of migrant communities, i.e., “the local status of the HL involved and, therefore, its public recognition, [and] public valuation” (Fishman 2006, 5);
- social pressure regarding the mastery of the host language (Adami and Leclercq 2012; Oriyama 2011);
- political support (namely at school in term of Linguistic Policies, as stressed by Shohamy 2006), sociocultural context (Oriyama 2011), and community initiatives to improve the learning of heritage and host languages (García, Zakharia, and Otcu 2013).

So, if family is far from being the only factor affecting HL learning, use, and maintenance, its affective support is acknowledged as fostering the wish to further engage with its acquisition and use.

### 3. The empirical study: project description and methodological design

#### 3.1. Project description

The study we are reporting here was conducted at the Portuguese Embassy in Berlin, as part of the scope of our activities of coordinating the Portuguese language-learning courses for children and youngsters with a migratory background. The project was called ‘Images of Portuguese (Learning) abroad’, and it aimed at collecting information about the representations of the Portuguese community, teachers, and students regarding Portuguese HL in Germany. This project allied two interdependent aspects of language education: investigation and teacher education. These aspects are assumed as a starting point for the construction of a sustained educational path, where future subjects in the training process can be identified in terms of personal objectives and needs.

Hence, after a phase of diagnosis of the needs for training and intervention, which has a nuclear theme diagnosing (circulating) images about the Portuguese language and culture in the different areas of intervention of Camões (the Portuguese Language Policy organism), we proceed to the construction of a teacher education path, based on the results obtained. This concern to know the affects and social representations different actors have on Portuguese language and culture (Mother tongue, Language 2 [L2] or HL), is related to the evidence that representations influence the teaching and learning paths and processes, the motivation involved in the study of a language, the choices in terms of linguistic offer, and the linguistic policies in a broader sense (Castellotti and Moore 2002; Cooke and Simpson 2012; Shohamy 2006). In fact, ‘ordinary beliefs are an important level of understanding language ideologies, and can certainly be more powerful than sociolinguistic descriptions in influencing the direction of legislation, for instance’ (Cooke and Simpson 2012, 118), because of its potential normative power.

Within this three-year project, we collected three categories of data:

- drawings by children regarding their perception of being or feeling multilingual (including Portuguese) (<http://cepealemanha.wordpress.com/imagens-do-ensino-portugues-no-estrangeiro/>);
- Portuguese Community’s and PHL teachers’ online answers to a questionnaire regarding their representations about Portuguese language;
- entries on a discussion forum regarding the meaning of having a Portuguese background (<http://cepealemanha.wordpress.com/forum-de-discussao/o-que-significa-ter-raizes-portuguesas-hoje/>).

In the scope of this study, we will compare data from drawings, and from the discussion forum, in order to fully understand pupils’ perspectives on the family and its attachment to the HL. In order to understand the social and linguistic context underlying this study, the following subsection presents a rather short panorama of the Portuguese community in Germany.

##### 3.1.1. The Portuguese community in Germany

The history of the Portuguese community in Germany can be traced back to 1964. This was the year of the protocol between the former ‘Federal Republic of Germany’,<sup>1</sup> and the Portuguese Government, which established the conditions regarding the acceptance of Portuguese ‘*Gastarbeiter*’ (‘invited workers’ if we translate it) in German territory. The principal aim of the German Government was to provide the country with a labor force

Table 1. The 15 most representative communities in Germany (31 December 2011).

Country of origin	Population
Turkey	160,716,100
Italy	52,015,900
Poland	46,848,100
Greece	28,368,400
Croácia	22,301,400
Serbia (with and without Kosovo)	19,798,400
Russian	19,531,000
Austria	17,592,600
Romania	15,922,200
Bosnia and Herzegovina	15,347,000
Holland	13,766,400
Kosovo	13,693,700
Ukraine	12,330,000
Portugal	11,553,000
France	11,093,800

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (<http://www.de.statista.com>).

for reconstruction after World War II, namely in terms of infrastructure recovery (the main employment for the Portuguese workers at the time), and to reinforce the economy. Several protocols were also signed with other countries, such as Turkey, and Turkish workers remain, until the present day, the most representative ‘guest’ community in Germany (see Table 1).

In terms of actual situation and evolution, we can observe the stability of the Portuguese-speaking population (Portuguese and Brazilian) over the last years. As we will see, both communities are well represented in our school population and in our corpora (see Table 2).

As a result of the recent financial and economic crisis, and the shortage of employment in Portugal, we can foresee an evolution of these numbers at the end of 2013 (statistics being actualized every two years). The present profile of the Portuguese diaspora nowadays also includes graduate and postgraduate workers.

In terms of school population, and regarding the Heritage School learners (presently about 3500), the majority of the enrolled students have Portuguese nationality (73%). The second more representative nationality is the German one (25%, from mixed couples), followed by Brazil and Angola. In a previous study on enrollment enquiries for the school year 2012/2013 (Melo-Pfeifer and Schmidt 2012), we noticed that 76% of the students use Portuguese at home, followed by 18% using German, and 5% both of these

Table 2. Situation of the Portuguese-speaking communities in Germany.

	2009	2011
Brazil	32,445	33,865
Portugal	113,260	115,530
Total	145,705	149,395

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (<http://www.de.statista.com>).



languages. In terms of other linguistic social uses, the proportion is quite the inverse: 74% use German, 18% Portuguese, and 8% both of them.

3.2. Methodological design

Because we try to understand the social representations children and youngsters have regarding the role of family in Portuguese HL use and learning, we will focus our attention on two sorts of data: the drawings and the participation in the discussion forum (see Table 3):

As far as the use of drawings as a research method is concerned, we may say that this methodology allows the ‘mise en mouvement d’un imaginaire’ (Moore and Castellotti 2011: 122),<sup>2</sup> through a reflective and multimodal activity anchored in each pupil’s experiences (see Mavers 2009). As in psychology, where drawings are used to study the patterns of childrens’ development, or to diagnose disturbances and traumas (Antier, 2006; Bédard, 2007; Wallon, 2001), drawings can also be used to analyze how children represent conceptual knowledge and give sense to their experiences (Mavers 2009; Molinié 2009):

Social semiotic studies of children writing and drawing as graphic multimodal ensembles in educational, home and community contexts investigate how they deploy the resources available to them and how this gives particular shapes to meaning (Mavers 2009, 264).

This methodology has been used to portray childrens’ relationships to different languages and cultures present in their social milieu (Perregaux 2011), and to the different linguistic resources they possess (Busch 2010; Melo-Pfeifer and Schmidt 2012; Moore and Castellotti 2011), allowing the analysis of social representations and stereotypes toward linguistic and cultural diversity. Compared with other methodologies, it could be said that this one better suits a young public learning how to write, sometimes very shy when it comes to oral expression in the HL classroom (the context of our data collection), where so many proficiency profiles collide. Furthermore, drawing is a very familiar task to children and they feel comfortable doing it with the teacher.

The given instruction in the classroom by the Portuguese as heritage language (PHL) teacher was ‘Draw yourself speaking the languages you know’. This instruction aimed at confronting children with their linguistic biographies (Molinié 2009) and knowledge, and at valuing their multilingual expertise; by using the verb ‘know’ we tried to avoid categorizations such as ‘school language and extra-curricular’, ‘languages I love / I hate’ or ‘languages I am very proficient in or not so good at’. We had the collaboration of 34 HL teachers, who developed this activity in their classrooms.

Regarding the analysis of the drawings, we must recall that they are multimodal productions combining illustration and written elements; those written elements usually add sense to the drawing or describe its meaning (like a caption), in a somehow redundant way. Figure 1 shows a depiction of child (Noémia) and grandmother (Avó),

Table 3. Collected data.

Drawings	Entries on the discussion forum
956	142 messages





Figure 1. Child (called Noémia) and Grandmother (Avó) speaking to each other.

with several contextual elements, like exterior environment, bullets, and actors' identification:

As we noticed in previous work, 'our corpora show regular features in the accomplishment of the reflective and multimodal task' (Melo-Pfeifer and Schmidt 2012). This means that the common selected aspects may indeed be 'the focus of the individuals' immediate interest' (Mavers 2009, 265) and that people, scenes, and events portrayed by children are not arbitrary or unintentional, but particularly evocative (Hopperstad 2010; Mavericks 2009; Molinié 2009). We selected all the drawings in our corpora that contained allusions to the family, usually communicative situations. We then counted all the occurrences of family degrees represented, and we described and categorized the depicted situations.

Regarding the entries in the discussion forum (triggered by the question 'What does it mean to have Portuguese roots, nowadays?'), we isolated all the posts including references to the family, and we also counted all the occurrences that mentioned family degrees of relationships. After that, we studied the discursive sphere where those relatives were evoked (see Table 4).

The participation was open to students from several countries but the majority of all entries were produced by youngsters living in Germany. Many of those entries were written in the HL classroom and they reveal a very normative use of the language. Other entries were produced out of the classroom, in a less controlled and probably more fluid environment, as they present many linguistic characteristics identified as common in Portuguese–German children's repertoires (Flores 2004; Flores and Barbosa 2012), like the omnipresence of the personal pronoun 'I' ('Eu') when it would be usually absent (the Portuguese verbal conjugation already signals the subject of the sentence: '[O] You ao cinema').

Table 4. Entries in the discussion forum.

Total posts	Total students' posts	Students' posts referring to the family
142	88	48

Table 5. References to the family in the drawings.

	References in German	References in Portuguese	Total
Mother	5	10	15
Father	5	9	14
Sister/brother	3	3	6
Grandparents	4	5	9
Parents	0	2	2
Family	0	1	1
Total	17	30	47

Both sets of data allow us to address our research questions (see Introduction section), regarding the depiction of different relatives, the selection of situations and communicative contexts, and the roles assigned to parents and/or other relatives regarding the use and the transmission of the HL.

#### 4. Data analysis

Our empirical study will be conducted in two phases. In the first one, we will present the semiotic analysis of the children's drawings. In the second one, a discursive analysis of the interaction in the discussion forum will be made.

##### 4.1. Drawings analysis

In a previous study (Melo-Pfeifer and Schmidt 2012), when analyzing the most frequent words accompanying these drawings, references to family, both in German and in Portuguese, were present (see Table 5).

Even if the number of references is not large considering the amount of drawings collected, we noticed a higher tendency to refer to the family in HL. Furthermore, references to both parents are more visible than references to the rest of the family, which suggest and reinforce a strong connection between HL education and the family milieu.

The multilingual life of our pupils is clearly defined in terms of the distribution of the other social actors they deal with. In this sense, the family is the PHL social space, complementarily with other social spaces, such as the friends' inner circle (in German) or the classroom (for foreign language education), as Figure 2 illustrates it.

These spaces are represented separately and they seem to illustrate different moments of everyday-life dependent on language distribution and interlocutors. Regardless of this partition, the child is the common constant mediating and integrating all these contexts and making sense out of them. The family is here presented as the space where interaction in PHL takes place, around the table, with the father ('Pai'), the mother ('Mãe'), and a sister ('irmã').

Sometimes, however, this sense of 'equilibrium' seems to be absent, when the child really feels like living different lives in different spaces with different actors. Figure 3 shows the weight family has in providing moments of happiness and a sense of belonging to a community.

This drawing contrasts a big family in the country of origin, surrounded by the sun, the sky and the sea, on the one hand, and the lonely life in the host country, with unpleasant weather, on the other. Again, the family is a 'friendly communication locus'

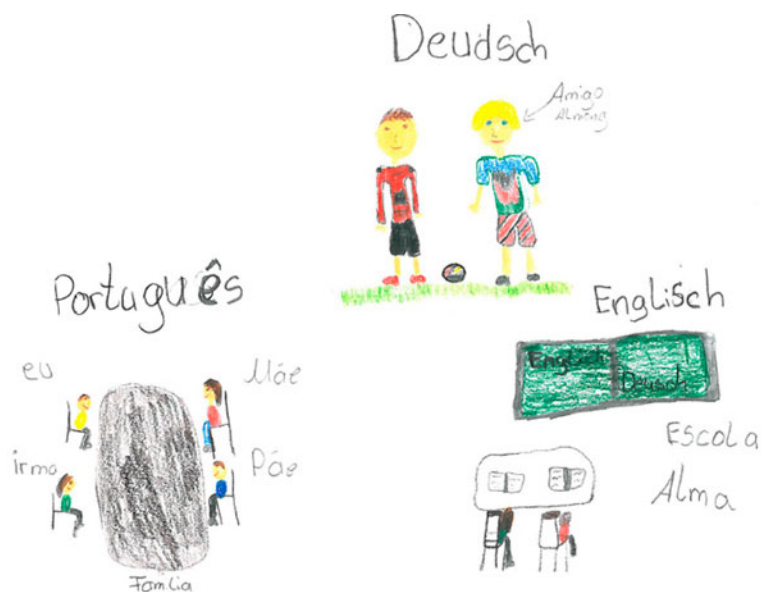


Figure 2. Multilingual social spaces.

and the child writes Portuguese captions to explain this section of the drawing. The German ‘side of life’, however, is absent of words: sadness, loneliness, and silence fulfills the scenario. In contrast to Figure 3, a clear distinction between two worlds is made: the happy smiling family, missed by the child, and the sad ‘self’.

Figure 4 illustrates a personal linguistic biography attached to the parents’ origins (Japan and Brazil) and to the experience of different countries.



Figure 3. Portugal vs. Germany: family vs. loneliness.



Figure 4. A linguistic and cultural biography.

The imagery attached to this drawing gets its inspiration from Manga cartoons, suggesting an identity affiliation to the mothers' country (cultural heritage more than linguistic heritage). The multilingual repertoire seems to be composed of four languages (Japanese, English, German, and Portuguese): the child keeps all languages separate in order to convey insightful meaning to all those biographical data (except perhaps for Japanese); each language is associated to a different country, to different actors, and to different biographic chapters. Such a biographical representation corroborates that 'our real 'language' is very much a biographical given, the structure of which reflects our own histories and those of the communities in which we spend our lives' (Blommaert 2010, 103).

As in Figure 4, Figure 5 also depicts a multi-heritage family: a Portuguese father and a Polish mother. Unlike the previous drawing, this family is also comprised of a younger brother.

This family presents different configurations with regard to the places, the actors represented, and the languages used: visiting Portugal is attached to the father's presence ('I am with my father in Portugal'), whilst visiting Poland is attached to a mother-child



Figure 5. Multi-heritages and everyday life.

connection ('I am with my mother in Poland'). Germany is the common place for the family ('I am with my family in Germany'), where a common language is spoken (German). So, different family members convey different cultural and linguistic heritages and children are able to identify the contribution of each family member and to act linguistically according to each part of it.

As in Figure 1, Figure 6 also represents the connection children establish with grandparents. This connection is lived in Portugal in a joyful environment between the sea, nature, and summer parties ('festas' in the caption):

The two main situations represented in our corpora relate to: (1) visiting Portugal together with the parents (Figure 5) and meeting the family (Figures 3 and 6) and (2) living within the family inner circle in Germany (Figures 2 and 5). The situations are communicative (in a broader sense), which seem to stimulate an exposure to a natural



Figure 6. Visiting grandparents in Portugal.

acquisition environment. This account corroborates Carreira and Kagan's affirmation that communication with family is one of the most powerful motivations students have to engage with HL learning (2011).

#### 4.2. Analysis of the discussion forum

In 47 entries from students referring to the family, we found 42 occurrences which mentioned the family as a whole. From this perspective, for the students participating in this discussion forum, the family is the main tie to Portugal and to Portuguese as HL (others being 'food' or 'music') (see Table 6).

The more prominent visibility given to the family lies perhaps in the task design: in the first (drawings by children), the instructional focus was on the languages; in the discussion forums, the given question triggering the participation was 'what does it mean to have Portuguese roots?', giving far more space for the emergence of references to the family.

When writing 'family', it is interesting to notice that students are referring to the family in Portugal, the 'ancestral' relationship to Portugal. Some examples of this synecdoche connection are listed in Table 7.

Table 6. Family matters: allusion to the family in the discussion forum.

Family/relatives	Occurrences
Family ('my family', 'Portuguese family', ...)	42
Parents	9
Mother	7
Grandparents	7
Father	5
Cousins	3
Uncles/aunties	1

As shown in this table, referring to the family and to Portugal as a whole underpins an integrative motivation to learn Portuguese. The family acquires two major functions: (1) the ‘physical’ and affective *locus* where learning takes place (examples 1 and 2) and (2) the trigger that raises the aforementioned integrative motivation (examples 1 and 3).

As we also notice, if the reference to the family living in Germany (as depicted in section 4.1.) is made in different languages and ‘home’ is seen as a translanguaging space where composite identities are played, then referring to the family in Portugal is made in Portuguese-only and attached to the exclusive use of this language (‘I have to speak Portuguese with them’, in example 1). Thus, family has multiple functions depending on the languages used and the spaces they occupy (monolingual or multilingual):

Table 7. Identity synecdoche: when Portugal means family.

Example	Portuguese original post	English translation
1	‘a maior parte da minha familia vive em portugal por isso tenho de falar portugues com eles e gosto.’	‘the major part of my family lives in Portugal, so I have to speak Portuguese with them and I like it.’
2	‘tenho familia em portugal, de quem gosto muito, que visito todos os anos Portugal.’	‘I have family in Portugal, that I love, and I visit Portugal every year.’
3	‘toda a minha família é portuguesa esta é a razão pelo qual eu aprendo o Português.’	‘all my family is Portuguese and that’s why I am learning Portuguese.’

Example	Portuguese original post	English translation
4	“Para mim ter raízes portuguesas significa ter dois lares; um aqui na Alemanha e outro em Portugal. Porém acho que não é exagerado dizer que ter dois lares é como ter duas famílias, já que nunca vejo as duas ao mesmo tempo, ou seja, tenho uma família portuguesa e uma alemã.”	“For me, having Portuguese roots means having two homes: one here in Germany and another in Portugal. However, I guess it is not exaggerated to say that having two homes is just like having two families, because I never see both at the same time, i.e., I have a Portuguese and a German family”.

This affective dimension is also attached to positive reinforcement made by the family members regarding the children’s attempt to communicate in HL:

Example	Portuguese original post	English translation
5	“Tambem eu gosto de ser portuguesa! eu adoro ir todos os anos a portugal porque eu gosto do sol e das praias. Tambem gosto de ver o resto da minha familia como as minhas primas e tios... Gosto de falar a lingua portuguesa com os meus amigos em portugal! <b>O meu pai gosta muito de me ouvir falar portugueses</b> 😊”	“I also love being Portuguese! I love visiting Portugal every year because I like the sun and the beaches. I also like to see the rest of my family, like my cousins and uncles and aunties... I like speaking Portuguese with my friends in Portugal. <b>My father really enjoys hearing me speak Portuguese</b> 😊”

The affective connection to Portugal is not only attached to living relatives, but also to the dead ones: roots are a symbolic attachment to a country and they are preserved after death:



Example	Portuguese original post	English translation
6	“Essa terra é muito importante para mim porque metade da minha família está lá e <b>faleceu lá</b> . Moramos na Alemanha mas temos uma casa própria lá em Portugal.”	“Portugal is very important to me because half of my family is there and <b>died there</b> . We live in Germany but we have our own house there in Portugal”.

Regarding the differences between both corpora, we may conclude that older students are able to refer to or even analyze, in more depth, the role of the family in motivating or in providing meaningful input situations. Despite this observation, it is possible to consider that both drawings and entries in the discussion forum convey the children’s and the youngsters’ perceptions of the families’ central role in the transmission of and the affective attachment to HL.

## 5. Conclusions and HL policy implications

Our study highlighted two major roles assigned to the family, particularly to its inner circle (parents and brothers or sisters): (1) an affective and emotional role, related to identity development and tradition transmission and (2) a cognitive and verbal role, since the privileged space for HL acquisition occurs during the first period of socialization. In addition, we also observed that these affective and emotional roles seem to be particularly linked to grandparents, which becomes evident when children evoke Portugal and visiting Portugal or when they mention their motivations to keep on learning Portuguese.

However, two additional roles can be acknowledged regarding relatives other than parents: (1) a societal role, because they enlarge the collective use of HL and provide other spaces for its emergence and (2) an acquisitional role, since they assure the connection to other registers of HL, enlarging the possibilities of its pragmatic and communicative spheres, namely after the first immigrant generation. This means that, if children and youngsters translanguage in several spaces in the host country (and also at home) and display both identities, being exposed to individuals unable to do the same (like the grandparents living in Portugal) makes them acquire the ability to understand the contextual factors favoring both the monoglossic and heteroglossic use of languages. They may also capture the sense of a bilingual aptitude moving between ‘German-only’ and ‘Portuguese-only’: by doing so, they may become aware of the infinite possibilities of combining their resources and discover that ‘one and one’ is far more than (just) ‘two’.

Because of these features, we argue that linguistic policy toward the maintenance of the PHL in the Portuguese communities abroad must reflect some principles related to the role of the family in this maintenance. This also means that this linguistic policy for this specific public must rest on communities’ idiosyncrasies, values and aspirations, and must be able to mobilize them in original curricular scenarios (Lynch 2009). This idea joins Carreira & Kagan, to whom ‘HL curriculum and program design must be anchored in knowledge about local communities of HL speakers and about the particular HL learners that instruction is aimed at’ (2011, 59).

It is commonly considered that HL’s school alone, with its usually scarce material and human resources, cannot provide all range of possibilities to avoid HL’s erosion and disappearance. A way to elude this shortage, namely when dealing with severe financial conditions (as it is for the maintenance of Portuguese HL classes in Europe by the Portuguese Government), would be the ability to combine government’s means with

‘delocalized’ Portuguese civil society’s efforts in order to provide a richer and more diverse linguistic and educational environment. This could mean a greater involvement of families in the curricular design of PHL classes as well as giving them education on their roles as HL gatekeepers, for example, through a weekend school for parents with bilingual and plurilingual children. Since no allusion to literacy practices developed at home in HL was founded in both corpora, this involvement should also include awareness raising regarding the value of reading and writing in Portuguese at home, making the most of it in order to promote biliteracy and its development.

As it is already the case in some HL’ daily and weekend schools (namely in the USA, as reported by García, Zakharia, and Otcu 2013), parents and other relatives could be called upon to:

- develop meaningful curricular paths and programs (for the community in a given country), entailing a diversification and contextualization of linguistic and cultural syllabus, instead of homogenous ‘one size fits all’ PHL program and textbooks, or combining them in a more significant way;
- co-teach those programs, evaluate them, and suggest changes when necessary (Lynch 2009);
- provide authentic interaction scenarios with pupils, opening the classroom to the civil society, and enriching the discussions on composite and dynamic identities;
- create teaching materials or provide authentic documents (namely referring to the family environment in Germany and in Portugal) in order to enrich the offer teachers have at their disposal;
- help solve linguistic school tasks, as authentic linguistic resources and skillful social actors.

Those tasks would go beyond traditional ‘parental involvement’, usually related to ‘parental presence at school or their assistance with students’ academic work’ (García, Kleifgen, and Falchi 2008, 45), and foster ‘relatives and community engagement’ rooted in the family’s cultural practices and linguistic expertise, and enhancing their pedagogical co-authorship (the affective, social, cognitive, and verbal roles we referred to previously). They would become far more than just ‘users’ or ‘consumers’ of an HL system, financially supported by the original or the host country (even if they are called to pay a symbolic value to use it). Family and other relatives (as well as the community in a large sense) should be regarded as co-authorities and co-creators: as far as we have observed, co-financing the HL policy does not assure parental commitment.<sup>3</sup>

A problem worth dealing with would be teachers’ resistance to share their ‘expert floor’ with parents or other relatives and the community. Not only because of the authority they feel they have as owners of a ‘norm’, but also because they convey very traditional ideas on ‘norm’ and ‘correctness’ and they tend to prescribe a monoglossic use of PHL within the community. Being able to preserve this image is also a way of preserving an influence and a symbolic power in the community. We claim, however, that a linguistic policy for the communities must be found in the confluence of all actors’ needs and aspirations.

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Renningen), drawing 3 (RC, 10 years old, Minden), drawing 4 (DP, 11 years old, Ulm), Drawing 5 (VM, 8 years old, Gross-Umstadt), and Drawing 6 (L, without reference to age, Renningen).

## Notes

1. West Germany, during the cold war, as opposed to German Democratic Republic, also known as DDR or 'East Germany'.
2. Drawings have also been used with adults, specifically in teacher education contexts (Richards 2006), and with adolescents in several domains, such as the study of literacy (Kendrick and Jones 2008).
3. In 2013, a rather small financial contribution for Portuguese HL was introduced in Europe by Camões, Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua. This new legislation did not directly lead to higher quality demands (except diminishing teachers' absenteeism or getting better classrooms) or to the assumption that parents should more actively participate in HL daily-life.

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