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Family language policy in multilingual Filipino families in Italy

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ABSTRACT

Many heritage speakers in diaspora communities are multilingual individuals, often speaking two or more heritage languages alongside the societal majority language as well as another lingua franca (i.e. English). This paper examines the multilingual practices of 26 Filipino speakers in Italy (15 from the first generation and 11 second generation) in the framework of Family Language Policy. Four main findings emerge from the sociolinguistic interviews: (1) the multilingualism of the first generation is reduced in second generation, with Philippine regional languages seldom transmitted to children; this is reflected in a varied attitude toward these languages; (2) in parent–children interactions the mixing of Filipino and Italian prevails, thus, although Italian is present, Filipino is always maintained, confirming an overall positive attitude; (3) English is never selected as the only language of communication, but rather in combination with Italian or Filipino; (4) in the second generation, the exclusive use of Italian occurs with peers or younger interlocutors (e.g. siblings, partners, children). This study further contributes to our understanding of linguistic choices among multilingual migrants by allowing a comparison with other Filipino diasporic communities in Asia, North America and Australia.

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Heritage languages; Filipino; Family Language Policy; language shift; attitude

Introduction

Traditionally research on diasporic communities or heritage speakers is based on the binary opposition of heritage/minority *vs* the majority language (see Polinsky 2018; Aalberse, Backus, and Muysken 2019, among many others). Lately, more attention has been paid to the fact that heritage speakers often know more than one heritage language (HL) and more than one majority language (Aalberse and Lorenz 2023). For example, some Moluccan heritage speakers in the Netherlands speak two HLs: the variety of Malay that they spoke in the Moluccas (Indonesia) and the local languages, which they have kept speaking to some extent alongside Malay (Florey and Van Engelenhoven 2001). Thus, many heritage speakers are actually multilingual individuals using three or more languages within the family. Significantly, to the best of our knowledge, very few studies have systematically investigated this issue of how multilingual heritage speakers deal with their entire repertoire of languages and the choices involved for multilingual migrant families (Dumanig 2010; Axel 2011; Siebetcheu 2020). The present research aims to contribute to this line of study by investigating the linguistic choices of multilingual Filipino families in Italy in the framework of Family Language Policy (see §3).

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The Philippines is a highly multilingual country where approximately 163 indigenous languages are spoken. The two official languages are Filipino[1] and English. The former is the language used for interethnic communications, which allows speakers of different indigenous languages to communicate with each other, whereas the latter is used largely in spheres related to economy. Most Filipinos learn their local regional language at home (e.g. Ilocano, Kapampangan, etc.) and use it in their household and hometown, whilst learning Filipino and English in school. Thus, they are usually highly multilingual. In diaspora communities, Filipinos add yet another language to this rich repertoire (for instance Filipinos in Japan, Malaysia, and Italy also speak the respective majority languages of those countries).

Most studies on Filipino diasporic communities have focused on the loss/maintenance of the Filipino/Tagalog language (Hinton 1999; Tseng and Fuligni 2000; Dumanig, David, and Shanmuganathan 2013) or on language contact phenomena (Kang, George, and Soo 2016; Tanaka et al. 2019; Umbal and Nagy 2021) and only a few studies have reported, mostly anecdotally, on the role of regional languages and their maintenance in diasporas (Yamamoto 2005; Dumanig 2010; Axel 2011; Lising 2022). Furthermore, the studies conducted so far have investigated Filipino communities in Asia, North America, and Australia, but not Europe (see §2). Our study, thus, aims to partially fill this gap by analysing the language practices of 26 Filipinos in the Italian-based diaspora. Particular emphasis will be given to three innovative aspects. First, we quantitatively investigate the use of all languages in the repertoire, overcoming the binary opposition heritage/minority language vs. majority language. Second, we present a case study from Italy, which will allow us to compare strategies adopted by Filipinos in Europe with those of other Filipino communities in Asia, North America, and Australia (see §2). Third, we include data from second generation speakers, which were not included in other studies. The cross-diasporic comparison shows that, while data from Italy confirm the general trend of a low degree of HL intergenerational transmission, Filipino is still present in 80% of the households and speakers have a positive attitude towards it, although less so towards the other regional languages.

The present paper is organised as follows: the next section gives an overview of the findings of previous studies on Filipinos' language practices across different diasporic settings. § 3 illustrates Family Language Policy in heritage families and factors that influence HL(s) maintenance. § 4 presents our research questions and methodology, while § 5 shows the results. In § 6 we discuss our findings and in § 7 we give some concluding remarks.

Previous findings on Filipino heritage families

Filipino diasporic communities have recently begun to be investigated for the language dimension, with studies focussing on Filipino language maintenance, FLP and language change. These studies were carried out in Japan and Malaysia, Canada, USA and Australia, but, to the best of our knowledge, not yet in Europe. In this section, we review and summarise their main findings, to offer international context to our results and explore possible similarities and differences in the linguistic behaviour of Filipino families across different countries.

Japan and Malaysia

In Japan, Filipinos are the fourth largest group (169,359, accounting for 9,1% of foreigners), yet have the highest rate of intermarriage with Japanese (Yamamoto 2005, 592). Due to this trait, a group of 13 multilingual Japanese-Filipino families were chosen by Yamamoto (2005) to investigate the role of the family in maintaining the HL. The results show that, when communicating with their children, Filipino parents use mostly Japanese (42.9%) or English (46.4%); however, there is still a small percentage of code-mixing between Japanese and the native Philippine language (10.7%). As for the children, Japanese is reported to be their sole native language, except for two children who

are trilingual in Japanese, Tagalog, and Bisaya. Yamamoto (2005, 595) explains that language shift is due to the prestige that Japanese and English exert.

The results of Yamamoto (2005) on the importance of English and the limited use of the HL(s) are echoed by the studies of Dumanig (2010) and of Dumanig, David, and Shanmuganathan (2013) on multilingual Filipino-Malaysian families living in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, Filipinos are one of the largest groups (245,000 in 2009; see Dumanig 2010, 17), and their continuous growth has resulted in an increase in the number of intermarriages between Filipinos and Malaysians. Filipino women mostly work as domestic helpers, and therefore most Filipinos who married Malaysians are women. In the study of Dumanig (2010, 103) on 30 couples, 29 wives are Filipinos, and only 1 is ethnically Chinese. What emerges from the interviews is that English dominates in household interactions among Filipino-Malaysian families, with a peak of 70% for Malaysian Indian-Filipino families. Although English is chosen as the home language, code-switching is also very frequent in family communication, especially for the Filipino-Chinese families who code-switch to Mandarin, or to local Chinese dialects, and for Filipino-Malay families, who code-switch to both Filipino and Malay. From the anecdotal evidence reported in Dumanig (2010), it appears that Philippine languages do play a role in the home domain, with their importance diminishing over the generations. Finally, both in Japan and in Malaysia, authors report that Filipino spouses prefer the use of Tagalog or their native Philippine language to express emotions, for instance when they are angry, or conversely to express their feelings of love towards their children.

It is important to note that the studies in Japan and Malaysia specifically targeted mixed-couples, in this respect their samples differ from those of other studies, including ours.

Canada and USA

Filipino migration to Canada has been relatively recent over the last twenty years incentivised by Canadian government programmes to attract educated and skilled individuals. Two trends characterise the Canadian setting, Filipino immigrants tend to be young and of working age and there is a higher rate of female than male immigrants, with women mostly employed in the manufacturing, service, and healthcare sectors (Umbal 2016, 13). Tagalog is one of the languages of the *Heritage Language Variation and Change Project* (HLVC), a large-scale project led by Naomi Nagy, which investigates variation and change in ten HLs in Toronto, Canada (Nagy 2011). The HLVC corpus for Tagalog includes data collected by means of sociolinguistic interviews, ethnic orientation questionnaires, and spontaneous speech samples from a total of 55 Tagalog speakers – 20 of the first generation (G1), 18 of the second generation (G2), and 17 from the homeland.

Although heritage Tagalog in Toronto has been mostly investigated from a phonetic and phonological perspective (Umbal 2016; Kang, George, and Soo 2016; Umbal and Nagy 2021), some generalisations have emerged concerning the degree of language maintenance. Data from Canada seem to indicate that the transmission rate of heritage Tagalog to children under 18 years of age is rather low, less than 20% (Nagy 2021). In the HLVC project, the focus is on Tagalog, and the role of other Philippine languages has not been investigated or discussed.

In the USA, Filipino migration dates back to the late eighteenth century (Axel 2011, 60ff), with the group growing rapidly over the last twenty years thanks to chain migration and in 2008 counted 2,425,697 individuals, half of whom live in California. Axel (2011) interviewed 11 Filipinos (G1: 5 participants, G2: 6 participants). From the interviews, the pattern that emerges is also a shift towards English. For the G2, English is the main language used at home and away from home (along with Spanish, which is a widely used language in California). G2 children do not or only marginally acquire Filipino or other Philippine languages because their parents fear this will bring an 'accent' to their children's English (2011, 126), felt to be a severe limitation to social integration and higher-paying professions. Again, as seen with Filipinos in the Malaysia study, the usage of HL(s) is

mostly related to reprimands to children, communication with elders, and as a secret language, thus confirming the familial, emotional and identity value of the HL.

Australia

Filipino migration in Australia started in the mid-1970s reaching approximately 310,000 by 2021 (Lising 2022, 550). Lising (2022) interviewed ten G1 parents from five Filipino families, the parents are both Filipinos and all participants are skilled workers (e.g. IT engineer, marketing operations analyst, gaming machine attendant). The data come from sociolinguistic interviews and are mainly qualitative in nature. While all the parents continue to use one of their HLs with each other and with their friends, they have all (un)consciously shifted to English in raising their children. Similar to North American parents, this choice is partially motivated by an erroneous view of bi/multilingualism, believing that learning the HL may negatively influence the acquisition of English. Another finding is that Tagalog and other Philippine languages are not maintained to the same extent, with Tagalog being used more at the expenses of regional languages (Lising 2022, 564), as observed in Malaysia.

To sum up, despite the differences among the various Filipino communities in Japan, Malaysia, Canada, USA, and Australia, in terms of length of contact, size and rate of intermarriages, three general trends emerge. First, overall, the transmission of Filipino or other local Philippine languages is very limited, and usually the dominant language or English are preferred in the household, especially for raising children. Second, if an HL is transmitted, it is more likely to be Filipino rather than a regional language. Third, despite the low transmission rate of HLs, the domain of emotional expression is still the prerogative of HLs, and this holds true across all diaspora communities.

Heritage speakers and Family Language Policy

Family Language Policy (FLP) is a field of research that recognises the critical role of the family in HL maintenance. The term FLP was coined by Luykx (2003) and popularised by King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008), who define it as the 'explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home among family members' (2008: 907). However, such planning need not be overtly acknowledged; rather it may be tacit or unconscious (Curdt-Christiansen 2009). To understand what the policy of a particular family is, one needs to look at the parent–child relationship, the parental and social ideologies related to languages, and the practices implemented in the family to modify language use among its members (Spolsky 2012). Different language plannings are possible: one-parent-one-language strategies, distinct uses for each language (e.g. time and place strategy, or minority language at home strategy),[2] language mixing (e.g. code-switching), or parents' adoption of a *lingua franca* (as with Filipino parents in Japan who use English, see previous section).

FLP is largely conditioned by external and internal factors, which in turn, influence the language ideologies of the various family members (Curdt-Christiansen 2009, 355). Ultimately, the ideology toward a particular language within the family reflects the societal view of the language. As explained by Dressler (1982, 324), 'the basic mechanism of language decay starts with social change subordinating the respective speech community to another speech community. Speakers reflect this unfavourable change sociopsychologically by a less favourable evaluation of their language'. So, the lack of intergenerational transmission rather than being a cause of language shift is its symptom, the fact that parents chose not to pass on the language is symptomatic of broader societal attitudes towards that language. For example, the sense of shame caused by society towards the parents' accent may lead children to insist on a shift towards monolingualism in the majority language at home (Hinton 1999). Or children's use of the majority language when their parents speak to them in the HL can be a source of discouragement to parents. Thus, FLP is not unidirectional, since children's language choices also condition parental practices, with both ultimately influenced by the societal view of the language(s) (King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry 2008, 912). The societal

attitudes and ideologies are largely based on what Curdt-Christiansen (2009, 355) defines as macro factors, that is political decisions, economic implications of language use, and sociolinguistic practices of the country. But parental language ideologies reflect not only societal ideologies, they are also influenced by micro factors, such as (in)formal literacy practices at home, parental expectations for their children's future, parental education and migration experiences and their ideas about bi/multilingualism.

Among the most insistent macro factors are access to education and profitable professions, as well as the symbolic values (i.e. good/bad) that the dominant society associates with the languages. The socio-economic standing of most heritage immigrant communities is not high and this contributes to a stigma attached to their HLs. Often, barriers to social integration that parents have experienced first-hand, lead them to renounce HLs in favour of the majority language. Furthermore, with the exception of a few 'pluricentric languages', such as Mandarin Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish, immigrant HLs do not generally carry any particular economic power (Clyne and Kipp 2011). Parents indeed encourage their children to learn languages considered more socially and professionally 'powerful', such as English. However, the maintenance of HLs in the home is just as crucial as adapting linguistically to the majority language. While a lack of proficiency in the societal majority language limits the well-being of both children and parents, it is equally true that the failure of children to acquire HLs casts a gloom over parents and fosters disaffection (Tseng and Fuligni 2000; Curdt-Christiansen and Huang 2020, 180).

Language is a pervasive aspect in life, and associating negative emotions or beliefs to it impacts on its maintenance, especially in diasporic settings (Kasstan, Auer, and Salmons 2018). Mockery of accents, difficulty in integration, parents' beliefs that multilingualism creates undue confusion in their children and the idea that a language is of no use are all factors that fuel a negative attitude towards the HL. On the other hand, factors that favour HL maintenance and nurture children's desire to use it outside the household are: the personal or ethnic ties that a speaker feels towards a language (being able to communicate with loved ones, such as grandparents and relatives who live in the country of origin), positive life experiences associated with the language (e.g. use of the HL in peer groups for joking, cultural variety of the social network), and feeling prized for one's linguistic skills (Tseng and Fuligni 2000, 470–473; King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry 2008, 913; Vietti 2011; Lanza and Gomes 2020, 180; Sevinç and Mirvahedi 2023). As several studies suggested, the possibility of expressing emotions in the HL strengthens family ties and fosters dialogue with parents, and this is notably expressed by a second-generation Filipino young man in Italy:

Interviewer:	How important is Tagalog for you?
G2 (M, 21)	: It's hard to answer for … ehm … maybe with my parents I communicate my feelings better in Tagalog.

Languages are cultural tools that help us to convey our experiences and link us to a shared past and values among family members (Curdt-Christiansen 2009, 356).

The present study

This paper examines HL(s) maintenance in the Italian-based Filipino diaspora. With a population of approximately 156,000, the Filipino community in Italy is the largest in Europe, followed by the Spanish and German communities (ANPAL 2022). Overall, Filipinos are relatively well integrated into the Italian labour market, with women mostly employed as unskilled manual workers in the Social and Personal Service sector. Like Canada, there is a gender polarisation, with more women than men. Despite the long-standing presence of the Filipino community in Italy, mixed marriages are not widespread.

Previous studies show that G1 Filipinos emigrate with multilingual repertoires (see §2), therefore the first set of questions we ask relates to the repertoire: how rich is the repertoire of Filipino speakers in Italy, and what is the difference, if any, between G1 and G2 speakers? Are all the HLs (Filipino

and other regional languages) transmitted equally? The second set of questions that we aim to answer regards linguistic practices, so basically: who speaks which language to whom? (see Yamamoto 2005). We aim to find out what is the transmission rate of HLs, and what is the attitude towards Filipino and the other Philippine languages in the two groups of speakers. By answering these questions, this study significantly contributes to our understanding of linguistic practices among multilingual heritage speakers, and the family language policy of G1 and G2 speakers in the diaspora.

Methodology

Data were collected by means of semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews with G1 and G2 Filipinos in Italy.

Participants

A total of 26 participants of Filipino origin were interviewed in the cities of Rome and Salerno. Of these, 15 speakers (10 females, 5 males) belong to G1, as they moved from the Philippines when they were older than 18; their ages now range from 32 to 61 years, and their mean length of residence in Italy is 20.4 years. On average, they arrived in Italy in their late twenties, hence they had completed the acquisition of Filipino and a Philippine language(s) in the homeland and the onset of Italian acquisition began in adulthood. The other 11 participants (4 females, 7 males), whose ages range from 10 to 33 years old, belong to G2. They did not complete the acquisition of any HL in the homeland, and in all cases Italian has become their primary and dominant language. Seven of them were born and have grown up in Italy since birth, two others arrived aged 3 and 4, and the last two arrived at age 8 and 10. For the purpose of this study, we grouped them together under the label 'second generation' (here, G2) because they all started acquiring Italian before puberty. The participants were not selected on the basis of their proficiency level in Filipino or other Philippine language(s), but rather on their linguistic autobiography, to facilitate the collection of as diverse usage patterns as possible (Nagy 2015, 310). In Table 1, the data of the two groups are presented.

Please note that G2 participants interviewed here are not the children of G1 participants, with one exception, they come from different families. Data from G1 and G2 from different families are useful to gather converging evidence.

We applied quasi-random criteria for the participant selection and we relied on the social network established thanks to the *Filipino Women's Council* and the *Sportello TAM TAM* in Salerno to reach out to individuals.[3]

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted on the basis of a sociolinguistic questionnaire consisting of 72 questions. The interviews were conducted in Italian by the authors and were audio-recorded with prior consent. They took place at various locations, in most cases at the participant's or a friend's home. The questions were conversationally oriented, aiming to elicit (a) specific biographical information, (b) composition of their linguistic repertoire and acquisition path of their languages, (c) language choice and language use with different family members and friends, (d) attitude towards languages spoken, and (e) self-reported competence. The interviews were recorded

Table 1. Information about the participants' number, gender, and age in the two groups.

	Total	Female	Male	Age (M)	Age (SD)
G1	15	10	5	46.5	7.8
G2	11	4	7	18.1	6.8

with a Tascam DR-22WL recorder for a time of approximately 40 minutes, for a total amount of 20 hours of recording.

Results

Linguistic repertoire

The analysis of the interviews reveals that Filipino speakers are indeed multilingual. Besides Italian and English, ten languages are represented in the two groups: Filipino (Tagalog), Ilocano, Kapampangan, Batangas, Bisaya, Ilonggo, Pangasinan, Bikol, Cebuano, and Kagayanen (Figure 1).[4] All of these languages match the places of origin of our consultants, and are among the ten most spoken languages in the Philippines (except Kagayanen; see fn. 3 for Philippine Statistics Authority 2023). As G1 and G2 participants come from different families, they may speak different regional languages.

Out of 26 participants, 18 claim to have in their repertoire, in addition to Filipino, another regional language (sometimes even two). In the G1, multilingual heritage speakers are 10 out of 15, whereas in the G2 they are 8 out of 11. Sometimes participants know more than one regional language because they have moved with their families to different areas of the Philippines during childhood, or in other cases they learnt it (albeit partially) from their partner. The level of competence may vary from very proficient speakers to passive knowledge. Despite the level of competence, which may be low for G2 speakers, what is striking is that in almost 70% of the Filipino households at least two other languages are spoken alongside Italian and English. G1 participants speak a greater variety of languages, while in G2 only Ilocano and Kapampangan endure to a considerable extent. G1 speakers use their regional language for everyday communication in the family or with friends, whereas G2 speakers mostly use their regional language for communicating with their grandparents, although many youngsters are not interested in learning them at all (see also section on Attitude), as explained in this extract by Michelle, a G2 speaker:

Interviewer:	Okay, how important is Ilocano for you, from an emotional perspective?
G2 (F, 19)	: ehm [I would give it a] nine because, for example, there are people in the … ehm … I mean, for example, my grandparents, they speak Ilocano, I can see how happy they are when I try to speak it, so it's not so much for me but for them, because they see that I try to speak their language. Because there are, like, some of my cousins who for example don't want to learn it. They say: whatever, I was born here why should I learn it.

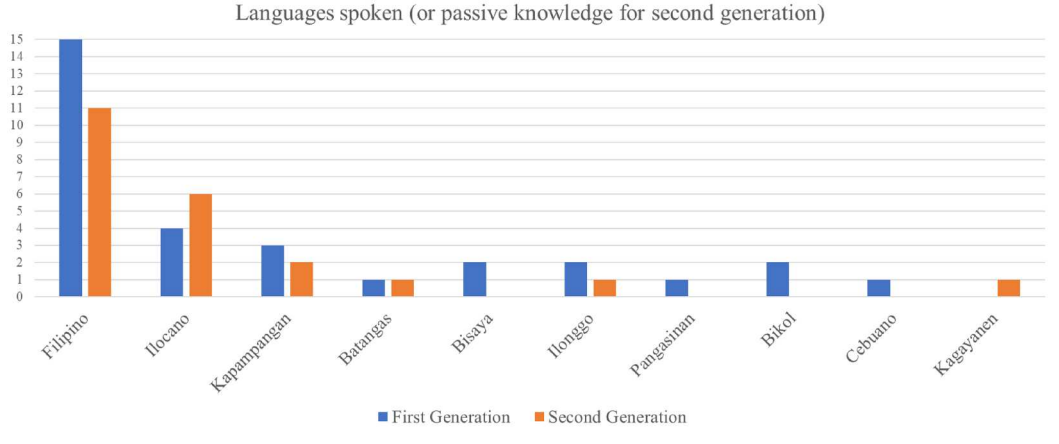

Figure 1. Languages known by the G1 and G2 groups.

FLP and language use in G1 and G2

The multilingual repertoires of Filipino migrants reflect an articulated FLP. Explicit and implicit choices that parents make at home inevitably change the transmission of HLs, and this (un)conscious planning results in constant linguistic negotiations and mixing in actual communicative events.

First, in Figure 2, we report the linguistic choices of the 15 G1 speakers with respect to their mother (M), father (F), grandmother (GM), grandfather (GF), siblings, partners, and children. In the figure, we have grouped together the various Philippine regional languages under the general label 'Regional language' (see Appendix for separate figures).

The first pattern that emerges is that exclusive use of the regional language is common with grandparents and, to a certain extent, with parents. This exclusive use diminishes drastically with peers (siblings and partners) and even more with children, who are most likely to live in the host country. More precisely, no speaker reports using solely a regional language when interacting with partners or children. The regional language is always in combination with Filipino and Italian.

Filipino also follows the above-mentioned trend, since it is commonly used with grandparents and parents, but less so with siblings and partners. Furthermore, with siblings and even more so with partners and children, the majority language (i.e. Italian) enters the picture and half of G1 speakers[5] report code-switching between Filipino and Italian when interacting with their children.

Only two G1 migrants report using a regional language with their children, either in combination with Filipino or with Italian and English. Interestingly, these two participants report speaking exclusively and consistently their regional languages, Kapampangan and Bikol, respectively,

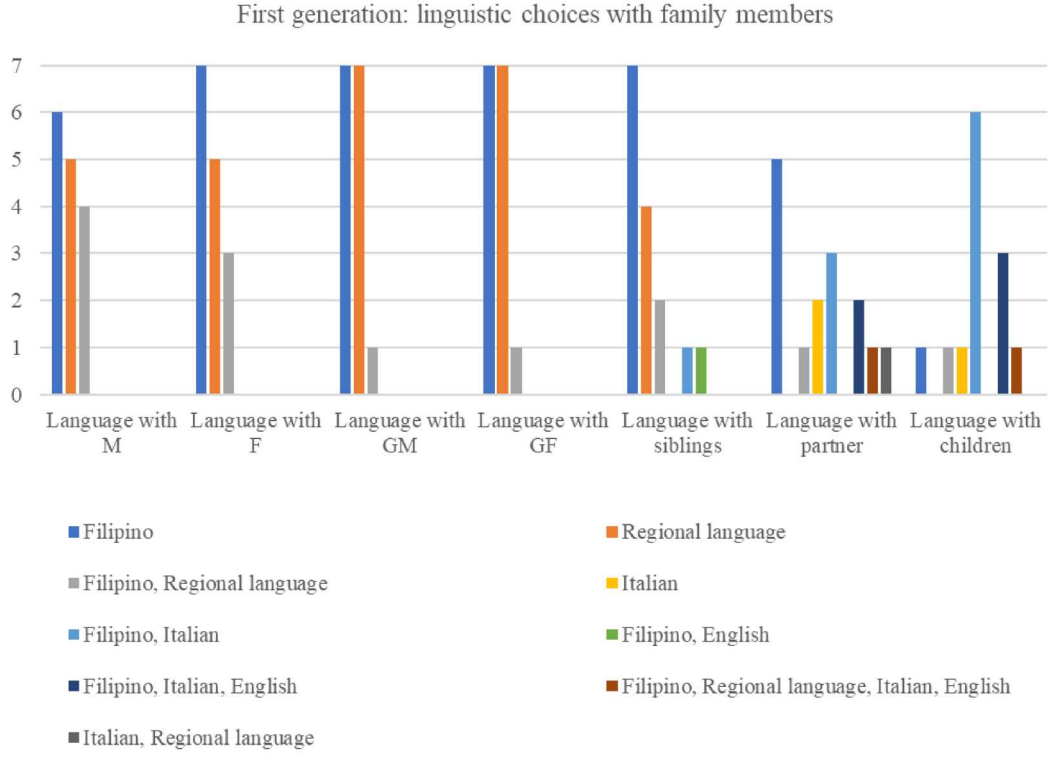

Figure 2. Linguistic choices of G1 speakers with their family members.

Table 2. Language use in Mother (M) → Child (C) and Father (F) → Child (C) interactions. Fil: Filipino; Ita: Italian; Eng: English; Kap: Kapampangan.

	Fil	Fil + Ita	Fil + Kap	Fil + Ita + Eng	Fil + Ita + Eng + Bikol	Ita
M → C	0	6	1	1	1	0
F → C	1	0	0	2	0	1

with their grandparents, parents, and siblings. Thus, this seems to suggest that the FLP of these two families is strictly oriented toward HL maintenance.

Again, in Figure 2, we see that G1 speakers make use of at least six strategies when interacting with their children. To look at these in more detail, in Table 2 we present language choices in mother–child and father–child interactions:

The first evident finding is that parents mainly use Filipino in combination with Italian to talk to their children. Table 2 also shows that it is mothers who maintain a use, albeit minimal, of regional languages, unlike fathers who never use regional languages in their interaction with their children. In general, fathers use Italian to a greater extent with their children, in the hope of promoting social integration, as Albert, a G1 speaker, tells us:

Interviewer: Do you think that Italian will make your children forget Filipino languages and traditions? If yes, would you mind?

G1 (M, 50): The possibility is there but I don't mind because … I mean a little yes and a little no because they are not accepted here, they feel it in school … elementary [school] … it's bad … because our children are Italian.

Now, in Figure 3, we turn to the linguistic choices of the 11 G2 speakers with respect to their mother (M), father (F), grandmother (GM), grandfather (GF), siblings, partners, and children. These data provide converging evidence, as the G2 speakers interviewed here are not the children of the G1 speakers in this study. With one exception, they come from different families.

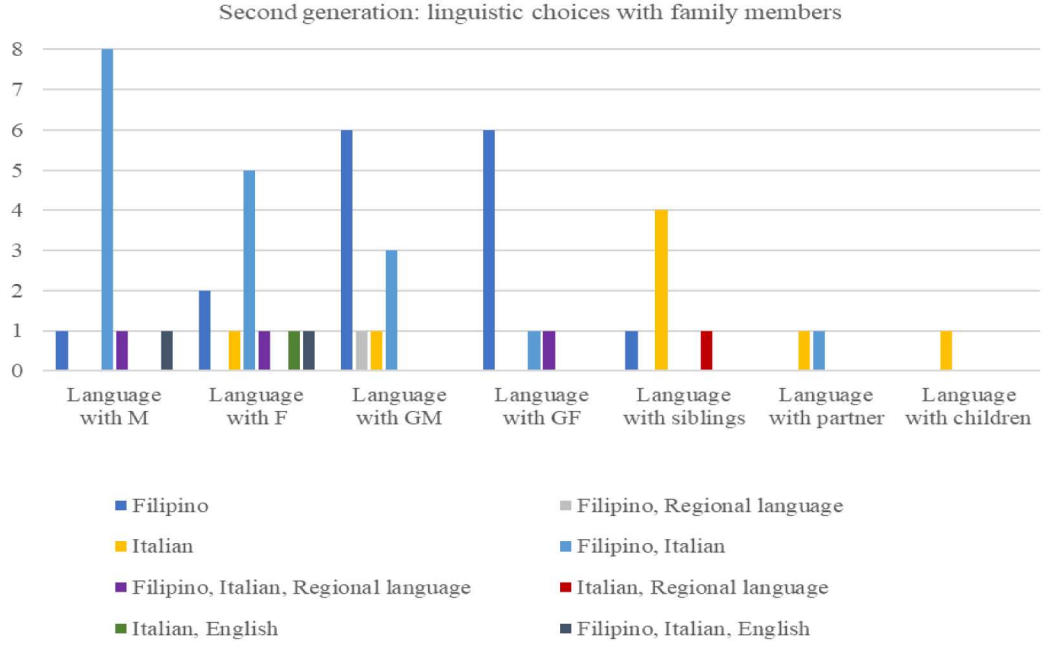

Figure 3. Linguistic choices of second-generation speakers with their family members.

Data from G2 speakers corroborate the findings observed above. First, regional languages almost disappear from the repertoires of G2 speakers. Regional languages are reported by only two speakers: the first one (F, 33) uses Ilocano in combination with Italian and Filipino to talk with her mother and father, whereas the other (F, 19) uses Filipino, Ilocano, Kapampangan and Italian to communicate with her grandparents. Second, Filipino monolingualism is chosen only to speak with grandparents. Third, G2 speakers favour the combination Filipino-Italian with their parents. This was also reported by G1 speakers as we saw in Figure 2. Finally, Italian is the preferred language to communicate with siblings, partners and children.

Despite code-switching, Filipino is a language readily heard in the home. Indeed, 11 speak it with their mother and 9 with their father, as we can observe in Table 3.

As confirmation of what was said earlier regarding parent–child interactions, the answers of G2 participants reaffirm that exclusive use of Italian only occurs between children and father.

Attitude

Parental and societal attitudes towards a language influence the linguistic choices of individuals (see §3). In this section, we present the results of our study regarding the attitude that our participants show towards Filipino and other Philippine regional languages, and their self-reported level of competence. For attitude, participants were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 10 the emotional value of language X, where 10 represents an extremely positive attitude, while 1 represent an extremely negative attitude. Self-reported competence was based on a scale from 1 to 4, and participants were asked to indicate whether they speak [X]: very well (4), well (3), not so well (2), definitely not well (1). X is any language they reported speaking to some extent. As we can see in Figure 4, attitude towards Filipino is entirely positive (spanning from very positive to positive) in both generations. For the graph, scores of 9–10 were assigned to the category 'very positive', 7–8 to 'positive', 6 to 'neutral', from 5 below to 'not so positive'.[6] G1 appears more enthusiastic than G2, but, overall, in both generations the polarity remains decidedly positive.

We used non-parametric Kendall's rank correlations (two-tailed) to test for a relationship between attitude and self-reported competence. There is a significant correlation (N = 26) between attitude towards Filipino and self-reported competence in Filipino ($\tau b = .452$, $p < .05$), with a medium effect size (Plonsky and Oswald 2014, 889). Generally, speakers who have a very positive attitude toward Filipino tend to be very fluent, and, vice versa, speakers who are fluent tend to look at the language more positively.

With regard to regional languages, the attitude of G1 remains mostly positive, and language is often perceived as an identity marker, as explained by Jason:

> G1 (M 53): When I was in primary school, they practically banned it [Kapampangan] also because they are pushing that Tagalog must be spoken by the whole country … but if I have to publish a post now, I use Kapampangan because Filipino is my nationality … but … let's say … as a person I am more Kapampangan

Only two G1 participants report a not so positive attitude towards their regional languages, Ilocano and Kapampangan, respectively. As for the latter, Kapampangan is the language of the husband of the participant interviewed, so although she can speak it, she feels less connection to it.

Turning to the answers of G2 participants with respect to regional languages we note an interesting divergence with the group clustered at two poles of contrasting opinions. On the one hand,

Table 3. Language use in 2G Child (C) → Mother (M) and 2G Child (C) → Father (F) interactions. Fil: Filipino; Ita: Italian; Eng: English; Reg: regional language.

	Fil	Fil + Ita	Fil + Ita + Eng	Fil + Ita + Reg	Ita
C → M	1	8	1	1	0
C → F	2	5	1	1	2

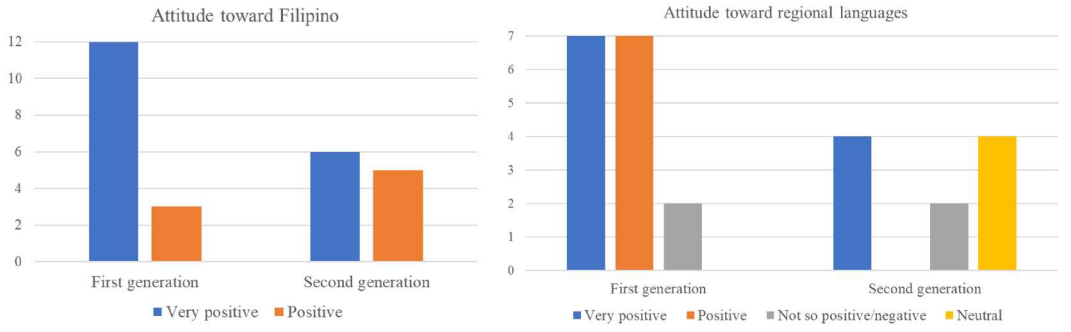

Figure 4. Language attitude towards Filipino and regional languages in G1 and G2 participants.

there are four speakers who have a very positive attitude; on the other hand, there are four speakers who have a neutral view and two who have a negative attitude. For regional languages as well, there is a significant correlation (N = 27) between attitude and self-reported competence ($\tau b = .416$, $p < .05$) with medium effect size. The following extract from an interview with Loreta, a G2 participant, confirms that generally G2 participants are not very proficient in speaking regional languages, and when they use them, they do so mostly in a light hearted or humorous manner:

G2 (**F**, **19**): In Italy [I use Batangas] when I'm with my friends when they joke around […] but … I mean … they're like me, they're not really good at it.

Discussion

The first aim of the present paper was to explore the richness of the linguistic repertoire of Filipino speakers in Italy, and the differences between G1 and G2. The data obtained from the interviews show that the repertoires of G1 and G2 participants are indeed highly multilingual, with speakers often using one or two regional languages as well as Filipino, Italian, and English. G1 participants actively use their regional language either in interactions with each other, their parents, and older people who come from the same area of the Philippines, or as a secret language. A similar finding is reported for the Japanese-based diaspora, where Filipino women speak their native Philippine languages in gatherings at church, or when they phone each other (Yamamoto 2005, 595), and for the Australian-based diaspora, where G1 couples continue to use their regional languages with each other. Thus, from the review of previous studies and the results of the present study it emerges that in diaspora settings, including Italy, multilingual practices involving Philippine regional languages are usually maintained among G1 speakers. However, this does not seem to be the case for the G2.

The ideology of G1 individuals regarding regional languages is more influenced by cultural factors than socio-economic ones, as for them the regional languages have a symbolic and identity value, rather than being seen as an opportunity to access social mobility or economic benefit (Curdt-Christiansen 2009, 355–356). Such ideology manifest in low intergenerational transmission of regional languages: if parents are to transmit a HL at all, they would rather teach Filipino than a regional language. The data from the different diasporas suggest a shift from regional languages to the more diffused language (i.e. Filipino), which is a shift that starts in the country of origin and continues more dramatically in the host country (for Italy, see also Chini and Andorno 2018, 303). Interestingly, Axel (2011, 34) reports that 'the ability to speak Filipino with others within the global diaspora outside of the Philippines may also bridge a communicative gap, but may also reflect a distinct identity marker, one which creates a social bond between other Filipinos'. Thus, the sense of belonging typical of the diasporic condition may also explain why in the diasporas Filipino is promoted over regional languages.

The second aim of the present paper was to find out who speaks what to whom, and what is the attitude towards Filipino and the other Philippine languages in the two groups of speakers. As for the G1, monolingualism in Filipino or another regional language is more likely to be found with older interlocutors, while with younger interlocutors code-switching in the majority language is more likely. The gradual shift from the HLs to the dominant language follows the trend *grandparents* > *parents* > *siblings* > *partner* > *children*. The majority of G1 speakers report code-switching between Filipino and Italian when interacting with their children. This may be evidence of a shift in progress from Filipino to Italian in the G2. The exclusive use of Filipino with children is extremely rare. Among G1 parents, it is mothers who more firmly maintain the HL with their children, while fathers appear to feel more strongly the impact of economic factors and therefore some of them use exclusively Italian, to improve the children's schooling and job opportunities.

As for the G2, data confirm that G1 choices are reciprocated by G2 participants. Filipino monolingualism is only chosen when speaking with grandparents. The choice of heritage Filipino or the heritage regional language by the G2 is an act of accommodation that allows them to establish communicative and personal closeness to their grandparents, as we read in the extract from Michelle given above. This choice manifests a conscious linguistic policy in which the G2 Filipino youngsters choose to renounce the communicative medium that is easier for them (i.e. Italian) in favour of Filipino, which is for them more difficult but more advantageous from the point of view of family cohesion and better understanding on the part of the interlocutor. Concerning parent–child interactions, we saw that G1 parents mainly use Filipino in combination with Italian to talk with their children (see Table 2 above), and G2 participants do the same (see Table 3). Filipino parents, and children, have (un)consciously decided to use Filipino to some extent as their language in the home, although fathers in particular, promote the use of Italian and English. With siblings, the exclusive use of Italian prevails, to the detriment of Filipino and regional languages, which are relegated to marginal uses (for joking with friends, to mock parents, or to communicate with grandparents).

Generally speaking, the attitude towards Filipino is either positive or very positive in both generations. The attitude towards regional languages is largely positive among G1 participants, because for them the regional language is linked to emotional, familiar, and identity aspects. For the G2, the picture is more blurred: some participants have a very positive attitude, while others do not feel any connection to the regional language of their family. The majority of G2 speakers does not have competence in the regional language to allow intergenerational transmission beyond G2, making these languages extremely vulnerable in the diaspora setting. For the G2, the more positive attitude towards Filipino than towards regional languages may be an indication that Filipino has helped to forge a pan-Filipino identity in the diaspora context.

Generally speaking, what emerges from the interviews is that the active use of the HLs (regional languages and Filipino) is functional in constructing the linguistic and cultural identity of heritage speakers. Nevertheless, the legitimate intention of the G1 to preserve their identity through the use of HLs clashes with the Italian social and political context where regional languages and Filipino are not perceived as assets. This results in the creation of devaluing belief systems towards HLs, leading to increasingly sporadic use of these languages in family interactions. In most cases, we have observed that parents are led to hold misconceptions about bi/multilingualism, often influenced by the negative role of institutions. Schools frequently intervene in FLP, advising parents not to speak HLs at home to avoid confusing their children.

Despite the tension that Filipino parents in Italy experience with regard to linguistic choices and strategies that they implement in the family, it seems that in Italy, heritage Filipino is somehow maintained more firmly than in other diasporas. In this, Filipino parents in Italy differ from Japanese-Filipino and Malaysian-Filipino couples, who mainly use English or the societal dominant language with their children. In our case study, this is certainly due to the fact that both parents are from the Philippines, and there are no mixed marriages. Furthermore, in Italy, unlike Canada, USA, and Australia, English is not the societal dominant language. Therefore the pressure to speak English in Italy is weaker than in Anglophone countries, where English

assumes the role of both the majority language and the prestigious one. Overall, we can say that in the Italian-based diaspora, from the point of view of intergenerational transmission, Filipino is more stable, while the Philippine regional languages are more vulnerable. This difference manifests itself also in the different attitude shown by G1 and G2 participants towards the HLs in their repertoire.

Conclusion

This paper explored the linguistic repertoires of first and second generation Filipinos in Italy and the language policies that govern their HL practices in the Italy based diaspora. Data coming from 26 sociolinguistic interviews show that Filipinos are highly multilingual with usually four or five languages in their repertoire (Filipino, English, Italian, and one or two regional languages). However, although regional languages are still part of the repertoire of G1 speakers, they are barely transmitted to children; this is also reflected in a variable attitude toward these languages. For the G2, regional languages have only a cultural value, and are used sometimes in an effort to communicate with grandparents in the country of origin, but mostly just a few words or expressions are used for jokes and to imitate parents. In parent–child interactions, the mixing of Filipino and Italian through code-switching prevails, thus, although Italian is present, Filipino is still maintained to some extent, confirming an overall positive attitude towards this language, which in the diaspora context acts as an in-group identity marker.

To conclude, Filipino parents in Italy experience a tension between using the dominant language, Italian, which is seen as providing better social mobility, the international language, English, a prestige language with economic force, and their HLs, which though not economically appealing, remain powerful cultural tools, equally important for the development of an individual. Understanding the language policies of migrant families and the language struggle they may experience is important not only from an academic perspective, but also from a social perspective, with the aim of helping migrants and second generations to construct a healthy multicultural and multilinguistic identity, and avoid the feelings of regret and frustration that derive from not knowing their parents' original languages, both national and regional, as explained by Antonio, a Filipino-American: 'we regret not learning the language when we were younger. Now, we want to learn about our culture and ancestry' (Axel 2011, 272).

Notes

1. Since Filipino is a standardised form of Tagalog (with influence from Spanish, English and other languages), the terms 'Filipino' and 'Tagalog' are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to the national language.
2. In the Time and Place strategy both languages are used at home and outside the home, but the choice of language is based on the topic, or on the situation, or on the time.
3. The Filipino Women's Council (FWC) is an organisation founded in 1991 in Rome, Italy, that brings together Filipino women and men migrants (https://filipinowomenscouncil.org/ [accessed on 04/12/2023]). The Sportello TAM TAM in the city of Salerno is an organisation that provides guidance and support to all foreigners and migrants (https://www.comune.salerno.it/amministrazione/settori/settore-politiche-sociali/area-immigrazione/sportello-tam-tam [accessed on 04/12/2023].
4. Languages may have various names. For instance, we find Ilocano/Ilokano/Iloko. Here we adopt the naming convention to be found in the 2020 census (see Philippine Statistics Authority 2023, available online at https://psa.gov.ph/content/tagalog-most-widely-spoken-language-home-2020-census-population-and-housing [accessed on 04/12/2023]).
5. Our dataset includes 15 first generation speakers, 13 of whom have children.
6. The convention we adopted is based on the Italian grading system, where 6 is the clear threshold between fair and insufficient/poor.

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Appendix

The linguistic choices of the 15 G1 speakers with respect to their mother (M), father (F), grandmother (GM), grandfather (GF), siblings, partners, and children (see Figure 2).

First generation	Language with M	Language with F	Language with GM	Language with GF	Language with Siblings	Language with partner	Language with children
Filipino	6	7	7	7	7	5	1
Kapampangan	2	2	2	2	2	0	0
Ilokano	1	1	3	3	1	0	0
Bikol	2	2	2	2	1	0	0
Filipino, Ilocano	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Filipino, Hiligaynon	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Filipino, Batangas	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Filipino, Bikol	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Filipino, English	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Filipino, Italian	0	0	0	0	1	3	6
Filipino, Kapampangan	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Italian	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Filipino, Italian, English	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Filipino, Pangasinan	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Bikol, Italian	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Filipino, Batangas, English, Italian	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Filipino, Bikol, English, Italian	0	0	0	0	0	0	1