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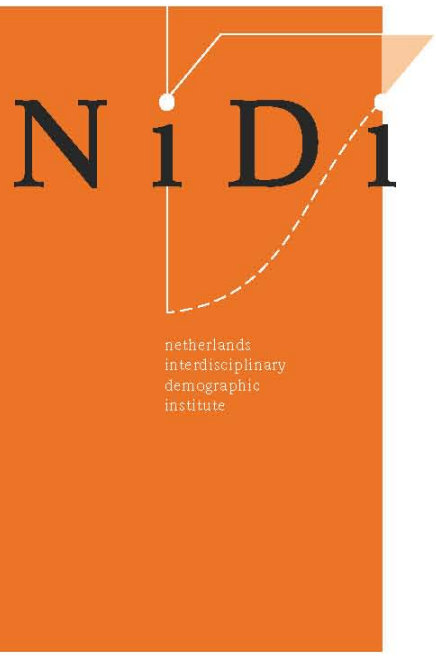

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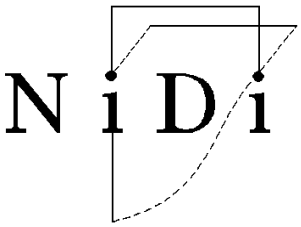

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Abstract

Language use patterns, generally involving the majority and/or a minority language, are considered to be an indicator of migrants' integration in the host society. In this paper, we aim to broaden our understanding of migrants' language use in the family by investigating which factors explain individual variation in language use patterns in European bi-national households. Our analysis is based on the Dutch data of the EUMARR-survey, a unique data set on European binational unions (n = 627). Our findings indicate that most European migrants intent to pass their native language to their offspring. Furthermore, the results provide evidence for the embeddedness of families' language use patterns within broader social environments. Finally, the findings indicate the importance of language status for the transmission of minority languages within mixed families.

Keywords: Language choice; family language policy; mixed unions; the Netherlands; European Union

Language is an important socialization mechanism, and 'a major if not the major tool for conveying sociocultural knowledge' (Ochs 1986:3). Language use patterns of migrant populations, generally involving the majority and a minority language, are therefore often considered as being able to inform us about migrants' integration into the host society (Alba, Logan, Lutz, and Stults 2002; van Tubergen and Kalmijn 2009). Research showed, for example, that migrants' proficiency in the dominant language is often important for their successful incorporation into the labor market (e.g. Chiswick and Miller 1995; Dustmann and Fabbri 2003; Shields and Price 2002), for their educational career (e.g. Entorf and Minoiu 2005; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Rumberger and Larson 1998), as well as for establishing meaningful links with the local population (e.g. Van Mol and Michielsen 2015; Wickes, Zahnow, White, and Mazerolle 2014). It is thus not surprising that a considerable number of studies have investigated language use patterns and proficiency of first, second and third generation migrants and their offspring across a variety of countries (e.g. Chiswick and Miller 1996; Espenshade and Fu 1997; Rebhun 2015; Shields and Price 2002; van Tubergen and Mentjox 2014; van Tubergen and Wierenga 2011; Vervoort, Dagevos, and Flap 2012).

In contrast, studies focusing on language use patterns among intermarried couples, consisting of a native and foreign partner, are rather scarce. Mixed unions, however, form an interesting group in which to study language use patterns, as the majority and minority language come together in one household, which might lead to negotiations with respect to which language should be used with whom. Compared to unions whereby both partners originate from the same minority, decisions on which language to use might thus be less straightforward in mixed couples (Pauwels 2005). In this paper, we investigate which individual and environmental factors are involved in the choices for the use of the majority, minority and/or third languages in families, using the Dutch data from the EUMARR-survey, a unique data set on European binational couples. We investigate processes of horizontal and vertical transmission of languages and its determinants within European bi-national families in the Netherlands.

Our contribution to the literature is threefold. First, the few available studies on language use in bi-national families in Europe mainly focused on a few non-European migrant groups such as Turks or Moroccans (e.g. van Tubergen and Kalmijn 2009; Vervoort, Dagevos, and Flap 2012), despite the fact that European migrants form a substantial share of the migrant population in many member states of the European Union today (Van Mol and de Valk 2016). Intra-EU movers can be considered to be a specific group of migrants, as they

have the right to freedom of movement. Because of their status as European citizen, no language requirements and/or tests are imposed on them, and they are considered to be 'unproblematic' in terms of social cohesion in receiving societies (AUTHOR(S) YEAR). Furthermore, whereas for non-EU migrants, knowledge and proficiency in the majority language is considered crucial for their societal integration, plurilingualism of intra-EU movers is often considered an important asset by European policy makers (European Commission 2012). In addition, most research on immigrants' language use patterns focused on English-speaking countries such as Australia (e.g. Chiswick and Miller 1996; Holmes 1993), the United Kingdom (e.g. Kirsch 2012; Parameshwaran 2014) and the United States (e.g. Rebhun 2015; Velázquez 2014). Second, we take the 'market value' (Bourdieu 1991) of different languages into account. After all, it can be expected that not all languages will be equally appreciated by migrants, which potentially influences the choices they make regarding language use. The status of English as a global language might, however, significantly influence migrants' willingness to learn the majority language in non-English speaking countries. To our knowledge, there are as yet no studies empirically investigating the connection between language status and language use patterns within bi-national families. Finally, in line with ecological systems theory, (Bronfenbrenner 1979), we connect language use patterns within mixed families to the broader microsystem in which individuals are situated. We start with the assumption that the language choices within families do not take place in a vacuum, but are – apart from negotiations within the family – connected to the social environment of family members in the Netherlands and abroad. Our paper thus advances our empirical understanding of the under-researched topic of the embeddedness of language use patterns within broader social environments.

In sum, we adopt a micro-level approach and examine which factors influence language use patterns in European bi-national families, the embeddedness of these practices in social environments, and the role of language status in the development of determined practices.

Background

Language transmission in migrant families

The family context is an important domain to consider when studying language choice patterns of migrant families (Alba, Logan, Lutz, and Stults 2002; Chatzidaki and Maligkoudi 2013; Lanza 2007; Pauwels 2005; Stevens 1992). For many migrants, the home offers a

protective environment in which customs and traditions can be continued, including the use of their own language. The minority language not only serves as a means of communication, but can be considered to be a fundamental component of the minority culture (Smolicz, Secombe, and Hudson 2001), which migrants generally want to pass on to the next generations. After all, languages that are associated with specific cultures are 'best able to express most easily, most exactly, most richly, with more appropriate over-tones, the concerns, artifacts, values, and interests of that culture' (Fishman 2007:72). Languages thus express culture as well as reproduce it, as words are linguistic 'symbols' of culture (Jaeger and Selznick 1964). As such, languages form an essential tool for passing on cultural knowledge and practices.

In the academic literature on cultural transmission, three types of transmission are differentiated: vertical, horizontal and oblique (Trommsdorff 2009). Vertical socialization processes point to purposeful transmissions between generations within a family or society, whereby cultural elements are passed on to the next generations. Such intergenerational transmissions are considered to be vital for maintaining the heritage culture over generations (Phalet and Schönpflug 2001). Horizontal transmission and oblique transmission, in contrast, refer to indirect socialization processes, more specifically influences from peers (e.g. friends or partners) and from individuals of one's parents' generation. In this paper, we directly assess horizontal (language use between partners) and vertical (language use with children) transmissions, and investigate which individual and contextual factors influence these language use patterns. Indirectly, oblique transmission is also considered, as we investigate whether parents' social connections influence patterns of language use with their offspring.

In a migratory situation, language transmission might not always be easy. The minority parent might, for example, have a wish to use the minority language in the household in order to maintain connections with the home country and/or pass on cultural practices. Simultaneously, however, they might be strongly in favor of acquiring and transmitting the majority language to their children, insofar as it facilitates adaptation and inclusion in the host society (Kirsch 2012). The vertical transmission of minority languages thus appears challenging (e.g. Tuominen 1999), especially when a native partner is involved. Research in the United States (Alba, Logan, Lutz, and Stults 2002; Grenier 1984; Stevens 1992) shows, for example, that exogamous marriages significantly increase the probability of using the majority language in the household for first, second and third migrant generations.

Individual characteristics influencing language choice patterns

Several individual factors have been documented to influence language use patterns of migrants. First, socio-economic status may play an important role in the maintenance or disappearance of a minority language. The direction of this relationship, however, is unclear. Whereas some North American studies conclude that with increasing levels of parental education, children are more likely to become monolingual in the majority language (Alba, Logan, Lutz, and Stults 2002), other authors reported more ambiguous findings. Stevens (1992), for example, reported that increasing levels of education of an individual decrease the probability of only using a minority language or some English vis-à-vis only English, but it increases the probability of using mostly English compared to only English. Conflicting results are also reported in the European context. A study among Greek, Italian, Russian and Turkish migrant families in Germany, for example, revealed a strong effect of educational level on minority language retention (Nauck 2001). The direction of this effect, however, differed according to migrants' origin: Greek, Italian and Turkish families with lower education levels had higher retention levels, whereas for the Russian-speaking families, higher educational levels were related to high language retention levels. For the Netherlands, van Tubergen and Kalmijn (2009) reported that higher levels of education of both respondents and their partners lead to higher usage of Dutch in the household. Furthermore, socio-economic status has been proven to be related to families' financial capacities. Increased financial capacity would enable them to frequently visit the home country as well as purchase books and minority language material for the bilingual education of their children (Tuominen 1999). Frequent visits to the country of origin are indeed one of the identified language practices and strategies that ostensibly enhance vertical language transmission (e.g. Parameshwaran 2014; Pauwels 2005).

Second, vertical language transmission might be gender-specific. Several qualitative studies indicated that mothers would play a central role in intergenerational transmission of languages (e.g. Kirsch 2012; Velázquez 2014), as they tend to be more inclined towards using the minority language with their children compared to their husbands (Castonguay 1982; Grenier 1984). Several quantitative studies, however, contradict these findings (De Houwer 2007; Stevens 1985) and did not find any differences between parental and maternal language use and intergenerational transmission of language.

Finally, it has been suggested that the employment status of the minority parent can influence language use at home, especially as regards communication with the children. Okita

(2002) showed, for example, that the work demands of majority group fathers meant that they invested less time in their children's (majority) language development. Consequently, in these couples the mothers had more freedom to transmit their own (minority) language to their children. Conversely, employed minority parents might be more exposed to the majority language in their workplace and have less time to spend with their children, leading to a potential decrease in their use of the minority language with their offspring.

The social embeddedness of language use patterns

Apart from considering individual characteristics, we take as a starting point the idea that language use patterns within bi-national families are related to the social connections of individual family members. Following Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, individuals' decisions, actions and experiences interact with broader micro-, meso-, exo- and macro-systems. For language use patterns, this also seems to hold true. Research on macro factors revealed, for example, that the use of and/or proficiency in the majority language is related to the size and concentration of a minority group (Chiswick and Miller 1995; Grenier 1984; Lieberson and Curry 1971; Stevens 1992; van Tubergen and Kalmijn 2009; Vervoort, Dagevos, and Flap 2012) as well as to a country's minority language policies (e.g. Curdt-Christiansen 2009; Lanza 2007; Portes and Hao 1998). In this paper, we focus on the microsystem, which involves socializing agents such as family and friends (Bronfenbrenner 1979). More specifically, we focus on the connection between language use patterns in the bi-national family and social relationships with family and friends within the Netherlands and the home country.

It can be expected that bi-national unions involving a native partner are often confronted with competing demands and expectations of the native partner's and the migrant's family. The family in the destination country might, for example, place strong expectations on the use of the majority language in the family, increasing the odds of using mainly this language at home. However, the household members might simultaneously perceive strong preferences on the part of the transnational family to maintain the minority language, especially when there are children involved (Stoessel 2002). Qualitative research of Tuominen (1999), for example, suggests that vertical language transmission is related to frequent phone calls to the home country. Kirsch (2012) and Stoessel (2002) showed that migrants themselves also place a lot of importance on transmitting the language to their children, as they often think this facilitates good relationships with the family in the country

of origin and teaches their children to move comfortably within the cultural environment of the country of origin.

Apart from the family, friends also play a role (e.g. Li 2006), although perhaps to a lesser extent. Social connections with friends who share the same mother tongue in the host country might, for example, be helpful for maintaining and vertically transmitting the minority language. Several researchers showed that contact with peer groups valuing the heritage language can be important for maintaining that language (Li 2006; Okita 2002), as they can offer external language support (Schaberg and Barkhuizen 1998). Okita's case study of Japanese migrants in the United Kingdom, for example, revealed that contact with other Japanese migrants was conducive to maintaining the use of Japanese at home (Okita 2002). Nevertheless, social connections can also have the opposite effect. Migrants might, for example, receive negative feedback from members of the majority group on minority language use, making them cautious about overtly using their native language outside their home (Okita 2002). To our knowledge, the studies of Braun (2010) and Vervoort et al. (2012) are the only studies investigating the relationship between majority language proficiency and social contacts with ethnic and native networks. Both studies showed that social contact with natives is positively correlated with majority language use and proficiency, while an opposite direction was detected when considering social contact with co-ethnics.

Language status

Finally, we take language status into account in our analyses. After all, not all languages may have an equal status for migrants. Languages that are spoken by a large population in the world as well as languages with a high prestige might be more important resources, potentially yielding profitable returns (Rössel and Schroedter 2014) compared to minor languages only spoken by a few (Gerhards 2014). Indeed, the limited body of existing research shows that language status – or in the terms of Bourdieu (1991), the 'market value' of a language in a specific context – plays a role in family language policies (Kirsch 2012; Schaberg and Barkhuizen 1998). Considering our study context, the Dutch government 'attaches great importance to the Dutch language' (Benedictus-van den Berg 2012:162), which is reflected, for example, in the requirement of passing an exam on knowledge of Dutch language for non-EU migrants. Consequently, Dutch clearly has the highest status for participating in most areas of societal life. English, as a hyper-central language in the world system of languages (de Swaan 1993), however, is also highly valued in the Netherlands. It is

the first foreign language pupils learn at primary school, and the number of schools offering bilingual programs in Dutch and English is on the rise (Benedictus-van den Berg 2012; Kuiken and van der Linden 2013). English is the most widely known foreign language in the Netherlands, with 90 percent of the population claiming to be able to speak it, followed by German (71 percent), and French (29 percent) (European Commission 2012). Therefore, in this paper we consider English, German, French and Spanish separately, given the probably different utility status for European migrants compared to some smaller European languages (e.g. Danish, Luxembourgish and Slovene). These smaller languages may be subjectively perceived as being less useful, and partners might put less effort into speaking or transmitting that language.

Data, Measures and Methods

Sample

Our analyses are based on the EUMARR-survey. This unique survey collected data between 2010 and 2012 among European bi-national unions in Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland, consisting of a non-native European and a native partner. In this paper, we use the Dutch data, retrieved from the DANS (Data Archiving and Networked Services) repository (Van Mol 2015). Respondents were asked about personal and family background, international experiences, social networks, tastes, identity and political and social engagement. The survey also contains detailed information on what language(s) respondents speak, as well as what language they use for communicating with their partners, children and colleagues. Although the EUMARR-survey contained information on language *use*, it did not capture language *proficiency* levels of respondents, their partners and their offspring, which is a common limitation for surveys of this type (van Tubergen and Kalmijn 2009). Nevertheless, for our study this is not a key issue, as we seek to understand which factors influence language use patterns in European bi-national families. The data was collected through an online survey in The Hague and Amsterdam. Couples were sampled through the municipal population register GBA (Gemeentelijke BasisAdministratie) of both cities. In this register, the first- and surname, birth date, place and country of birth, nationality, information on parents and children, and marital status is recorded for each individual registered at an address. The two most common bi-national combinations were Dutch-German and Dutch-UK couples, followed by Dutch-French, Dutch-Belgian, Dutch-Spanish and Dutch-Italian. This is in line with the overall composition of European binational couples in the Netherlands (see

van Wissen and Heering 2014). Ninety-three percent of the respondents completed the questionnaire online. The remainder used the paper questionnaire that was sent to them upon request. Respondents could answer the questionnaire in one of three languages: Dutch, English and French. The overall response rate was 37.1 percent, which is in line with response rates of this type of survey in the Netherlands (see e.g. Groenewold 2008; Groenewold and Lessard-Phillips 2012). All respondents were between 30 and 45 years old. This age criterion was established in line with the broader aims of the EUMARR-project, namely securing a homogeneous sample of respondents who started their unions in after the establishment of the right to freedom of movement within the Schengen area. We filtered out respondents with a non-European first nationality, as well as Flemish respondents, as Flemish is a very similar language to Dutch and including these respondents in the analysis would bias the findings. As a result, our analyses include 627 individuals – 306 Dutch nationals who have a relationship with an EU-national (presented as Dutch-EU in the tables), and 321 EU-nationals having a relationship with a Dutch national (presented as EU-Dutch).

Measures

Language of communication. The dependent variables measure respondents' self-reported main language of communication. A first variable measures the main language of communication between partners, a second the main language of communication with their children (if applicable). These two variables are based on the questions 'Which languages do you use when talking to your partner/spouse?' and 'Which languages do you use when talking to your children?'. Both questions were open-answer questions, whereby respondents could indicate a language under the option 'I usually speak'. Based on the languages respondents indicated, we created two dichotomous variables, indicating whether for communication with her/his partner and – if applicable – her/his children the respondent usually spoke (1) Dutch (reference category); (2) her/his native European language; or (3) a third language. This third category represents languages that are not the mother tongue of neither of the partners.

Individual characteristics. First, gender is included as a dichotomous variable (0 = male, 1 = female). Second, the employment status of the respondent and of their partner is measured by two dichotomous variables, one for the respondent and one for the partner (0 = unemployed, 1 = employed). As we do expect this to influence communication with children but not

between partners, we only include this variable in the models on communication with children. Third, socio-economic status is measured by two variables. As we do not dispose of a reliable estimator of respondents' household incomes, the subjectively assessed social position of respondents in the Netherlands is used as a proxy, based on the question 'When you consider your household income from all sources and the wealth you and your partner may have accumulated, could you tell on which step you would place yourself', ranging from 0 to 10 (0 = lowest level, 10 = highest level). We treated this variable as a continuous variable. Besides social position, we included a variable indicating respondents' educational level. Educational status is measured by an ordinal level variable ranging from 1 to 9 (1 = less than primary, 9 = doctoral or equivalent). We recoded this variable into three categories, based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011), namely a lowly (ISCED level 0-4), a medium (ISCED level 5-6) and a highly (ISCED level 7-8) educated group.

Social environment characteristics. In order to investigate how social relationships are related to language use patterns in bi-national families, we included several network characteristics in our analysis. First, we include a variable indicating the share of co-language speaking among friends in the core friendship network. This variable is measured as the share of co-national friends among the closest friends in the Netherlands, of which respondents could indicate up to a maximum of five. Along with co-national friends, we included international friends who would be expected to speak the same mother tongue – such as Austrian friends for Germans, or American, Australian or Irish friends of British migrants. This is based on the assumption that it is the use of the same language rather than nationality that might motivate migrants to use their mother tongue. Second, we constructed a variable measuring the share of friends for whom Dutch is their mother tongue, as this can be expected to increase the tendency of using Dutch. Third, we included two variables indicating frequency of contact of the respondents with the family network in the Netherlands as well as with the transnational family network. Both variables are based on a Principal Component Analysis with a fixed one-factor-solution, combining the frequency of contact with these respective networks in terms of (1) traveling to meet members of this network; (2) receiving visits from members of the network; and (3) having phone conversations (including conversations over internet through devices such as Skype). Respondents could rate each of these items from 1 (rarely) to 8 (daily). In our models, we use the regression scores of both variables.

Language status. We expect that not all languages have an equal status for European bi-national couples, so we included a categorical variable indicating whether the native language of respondents or their European partner is (1) German; (2) English; (3) French; (4) Spanish; or (5) another European language. 'Other European language' is thereby used as the reference category. We distinguished between these five categories as English, German, French and Spanish are the four most widely spoken foreign languages in the European Union (European Commission 2012). For the interviewed European nationals, this variable is based on the question 'In which language were you raised?'. For the Dutch nationals, this variable is based on the nationality of their partner.

Control variables. We included a range of control variables in the models that have been found relevant in earlier studies. First, age and age at first birth (where applicable) are measured as two continuous variables. Second, migration duration is included, as several studies show that over time, migrants will become more likely to use the majority language (Braun 2010; Chiswick, Lee, and Miller 2004; Espenshade and Fu 1997; Gijsberts and Lubbers 2015). Migration duration is measured by a continuous variable indicating the number of years a migrant spent in the Netherlands. As a considerable number of respondents (n = 110) did not provide this information, we had to manually estimate this number based on other variables. We distinguished between four periods of migration duration (2-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, and 16 years or more). Third, we included two variables specifically related to language use. First, a variable indicating whether the respondent is able to fluently speak the language of their partner (0 = no, 1 = yes), as this logically has implications for the available language choices. Second, we take the language used between partners (i.e. the dependent variable for the first set of analyses) into account in the second set of analyses, which focus on communication with their children.

Analytic Approach

We apply binary logistic regressions to investigate which factors are correlated with the language of communication. From the descriptive statistics (see further, Table 1), it becomes apparent that only two respondents communicate with their children in a third language. As a result, we only focus on Dutch and other European languages in these models. A comparison on the main language of communication with children revealed that over 95 percent of the Dutch individuals in our sample speak Dutch with their children. Given the fact that very few

Dutch speak a European minority language with their children (n = 8), we will focus on the minority parent only in the analyses focusing on vertical transmission processes within mixed families.

Furthermore, an analysis of the independent variables indicated that more than ten percent of our sample had missing information on one or more of the variables included in the models (see Table 1). As a result, we used multiple imputation to decrease possible bias (Allison 2001), based on the Markov Chain Monte Carlo Method (MCMC). Five data sets were imputed, and the average estimates across these five data sets are reported (Little and Rubin 2002).

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analysis. As a first step in our analysis, we investigated whether significant differences could be detected between the surveyed Dutch nationals and EU-nationals on the variables included in subsequent analyses. Dutch turns out to be used most often for communication between partners. No differences between EU-nationals and Dutch individuals were found. This finding suggests a significant shift of EU-nationals towards Dutch language use with the partner. When investigating whether both groups are able to speak the language of their partner, we noticed that Dutch respondents speak the language of their partner significantly less compared to Europeans who speak Dutch ($\chi^2 = 27.79$, $p < .001$). Two thirds of the non-Dutch EU-nationals indicated that they use their native language as the main language of communication with their children, whereas almost one third of the European migrants indicated a shift to the use of Dutch as the main language of communication with their offspring ($\chi^2 = 235.18$, $p < .001$). No differences could be detected between the native and European respondents with regards to language status.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for the Variables Used in the Analysis, by Couple Type.

	Dutch – EU		EU – Dutch			
Variables	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Subjective position in society	7.02	1.47	6.51	1.58	0	10
Frequency of contact with transnational family	-0.21	0.95	0.21	1.01	-2.34	2.97
Frequency of contact with local (Dutch) family	0.18	0.97	-0.17	1.00	-2.61	2.45
Share of mother tongue friends	86.25	20.97	27.38	30.26	0	100
Share of majority language friends	86.15	21.35	54.45	34.52	0	100
Age	39.33	4.10	38.75	4.11	31	46
Age at first birth	33.87	3.73	33.18	3.81	21	45

Variables	%	%	Min	Max
Couple language use			1	3
Dutch	52.9	60.6		
Minority language	30.1	22.9		
Third language	15.7	16.5		
Children language use			1	3
Dutch	96.6	28.8		
Minority language	3.4	70.4		
Third language	0.0	0.8		
Mother tongue European partner			1	5
German	19.0	20.2		
English	24.2	22.7		
French	12.1	8.7		
Spanish	9.5	8.4		
Other European language	35.3	39.9		
Gender			0	1
Male	63.7	29.0		
Female	36.3	71.0		
Educational attainment			1	3
Low	18.0	17.1		
Middle	32.4	27.8		

High	49.7	55.1		
Employment			0	1
Unemployed	9.2	16.9		
Employed	90.8	83.1		
Employment partner			0	1
Unemployed	17.2	7.8		
Employed	82.8	92.2		
Migration duration			1	4
2-5 years	9.2	15.6		
6-10 years	27.1	23.7		
11-15 years	33.0	24.0		
16 years or more	28.1	17.4		
Knowledge of partners' language			0	1
No	18.8	5.1		
Yes	81.3	94.9		
Observations	306	321		

Source: EUMARR-Survey.

Note: standard deviations shown where appropriate.

Furthermore, descriptive analyses of the individual characteristics potentially affecting language use patterns at home reveal differences regarding the gender composition of both groups ($\chi^2 = 76.19$, $p < .001$). The surveyed Dutch nationals are more likely to be male. Concerning the socio-economic background variables, significant differences can also be detected considering respondents' self-assessed position in society ($t(575) = 4.04$, $p < .001$). EU-nationals place themselves lower on the scale compared to their Dutch counterparts. No differences can be detected between the two groups, however, regarding the educational attainment of the respondents. Considering employment status, EU-nationals are more likely to be unemployed compared to their Dutch counterparts ($\chi^2 = 7.65$, $p < .01$). Similar findings are observed with regard to the employment status of the partners of respondents ($\chi^2 = 12.20$, $p < .001$).

Considering the social network characteristics, significant differences can be observed between both groups as well: EU-nationals have more frequent contact with the transnational family network ($t(577) = 5.11$, $p < .001$) and less frequent contact with the Dutch family ($t(580) = 4.30$, $p < .001$) compared to Dutch individuals partnering with an EU-national. Both groups also differ considering the share of friends in the friendship network with whom they share the mother tongue ($t(573) = 27.17$, $p < .001$), and the share of friends from the majority population ($t(573) = 13.28$, $p < .001$) in their friendship networks. For both variables, the share of such friends is much higher among Dutch individuals.

Finally, our analysis revealed differences considering several control variables. Whereas no differences could be detected regarding age, significant differences are detected considering age at first birth ($t(481) = 2.01$, $p < .05$) and migration duration ($\chi^2 = 13.42$, $p < .01$). EU-nationals are slightly younger at their first childbirth compared to Dutch nationals, and the partners of the Dutch nationals in our sample have resided longer in the Netherlands than the surveyed EU-nationals.

Language use patterns between partners

Table 2 shows the multinomial regression models on the main language of communication between partners.

We find that personal characteristics such as gender and socio-economic status are not directly related to the use of Dutch or the language of the European partner as the main language of communication between partners in European bi-national families (table 2, model 1). The propensity to use the minority partner's language, however, seems to be

related to social relationships with friends sharing the same mother tongue in the Netherlands. The higher the share of such friends in the couple's social environment, the higher the probability that the European language will be used for communication between partners. Similarly, the propensity to use the mother tongue of the European partner decreases when an individual has more majority-language friends in her/his social environment. Interestingly, the analysis reveals no relationship between frequency of contact with the Dutch and transnational family network and the use of the European language as the main language of communication. Furthermore, our analysis suggests that the language status of the minority partners' mother tongue plays a key role in language use patterns. If the mother tongue of the European minority partner in the couple is English, French or Spanish, the probability of using this language between partners is much larger compared to situations where the mother tongue of the minority partner is a lesser-spoken European language. In contrast, for those couples in which the minority language was German, no such difference was detected.

Model 2 shows overall the same pattern, except that the main use of a third language for communication between partners in European bi-national families is negatively correlated with low educational attainment. Furthermore, the results show that the likelihood of using a third language decreases when bi-national couples dispose of a larger share of majority-language friends in their social environment. Finally, the findings show that language status of the mother tongue of the minority partner also plays a role considering the use of a third language. Compared to smaller European languages, the propensity to use a third language is much lower in bi-national households involving a German-speaking partner, whereas for French and Spanish speaking partners, the likelihood is higher. In addition, it is worth noting that for both model 1 and 2, migration duration is positively correlated with an increasing use of the majority language. The longer the European partner resides in the Netherlands, the higher the likelihood of using Dutch for communication with their Dutch partner.

Table 2. Pooled binary logistic regressions on communication between partners (reference category = main use of Dutch)

	Model 1	Model 2
	Minority language B(SE)	Third language B(SE)
Individual characteristics		
Gender (ref: female)	-.120 (.259)	-.208 (.367)
Socio-economic status		
Subjective position in society	.065 (.093)	-.072 (.094)
Educational attainment (ref: high)		
Low	-.183 (.365)	-1.134 (.457)**
Middle	-.165 (.277)	-.383 (.340)
Social environment characteristics		
Frequency of contact with transnational family	.058 (.137)	.054 (.183)
Frequency of contact with local (Dutch) family	-.208 (.130)	-.060 (.157)
Share of mother tongue friends	.011 (.005)*	.004 (.006)
Share of majority language friends	-.013 (.005)**	-.016 (.005)**
Mother tongue European partner (ref: Other European languages)		
German	-.203 (.397)	-1.830 (.482)***
English	2.695 (.333)***	---
French	1.533 (.440)***	1.040 (.447)*
Spanish	1.578 (.455)***	1.134 (.486)*
Control variables		
Age	-.518 (.564)	-.005 (.667)
Age^2	.007 (.007)	.001 (.009)
Migration duration (ref: 16 years or more)		
2-5 years	1.712 (.453)***	2.556 (.635)***
6-10 years	1.091 (.383)**	2.550 (.598)***
11-15 years	1.159 (.348)***	1.630 (.589)**
European respondent (ref: Dutch)	-.466 (.399)	-.695 (.539)
Knowledge of partners' language (ref: yes)	-.799 (.572)	.836 (.417)*
Chi-square (df)	(19) 192.60***	(18) 118.70***
R-Square (Nagelkerke)	.44	.39
Observations	461	397

Source: EUMARR Survey.
Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.
--- = Not included because case numbers were too small.

Patterns of language use with children

In Table 3, we present two models on the main language of communication with children. In these models, we only compare the use of Dutch versus the minority language, as only two respondents used a third language for communication with their offspring (see table 1). Furthermore, we only focus on the language of communication as reported by the European minority parent, as only 8 Dutch parents indicated to use the minority language as the main language of communication with their children. Model 1 reveals that with increasing levels of parental education, the propensity of using the minority language with children grows. Considering the characteristics of the social environment of the surveyed bi-national households, the model reveals a significant correlation between the share of mother tongue friends in the local friendship network and the use of the minority partner's language for communication with children. In addition, similar to language use between partners, the status of languages shows to play a decisive role in using the minority language with children. The findings strongly suggest that when the minority parent's native language is spoken by a larger number of people in Europe, the propensity of using that language with their offspring increases.

In model 2, we control for the language used between both partners. Most of the relationships identified in model 1 persist in model 2. The choice for the use of the minority language with children is still correlated with parental education as well as the status of the European minority language. This particularly holds true for German and English. Furthermore, model 2 supports the idea that vertical language transmission is gender-specific. Mothers are found to be more likely to use the minority language with their children compared to fathers. Contrary to model 1, however, the relationship between the share of mother tongue friends in the local friendship network and minority language use with children disappeared. Interestingly, model 2 reveals that the most significant factor related to the use of the European language other than Dutch for communication with children is the use of the minority partner's language or a third language between both partners. As such, language practices between parents have their repercussions on language use with their children. If bi-national partners use a language different from the majority language in their relationship, the likelihood of using that language with children clearly increases.

Table 3. Pooled Binary logistic regressions on main language of communication with children, minority parents only (reference category = main use of Dutch)

	Model 1 B(SE)	Model 2 B(SE)
Individual characteristics		
Gender (ref: female)	-.734 (.480)	-1.193 (.526)*
Socio-economic status		
Subjective position in society	-.007 (.140)	-.012 (.155)
Educational attainment (ref: high)		
Low	-1.593 (.568)**	-1.587 (.632)**
Middle	-.173 (.518)	-.167 (.573)
Employment status respondent (ref: employed)	-.002 (.562)	-.032 (.624)
Employment status partner (ref: employed)	.345 (.777)	.108 (.826)
Social environment characteristics		
Frequency of contact with transnational family	.368 (.220)	.360 (.233)
Frequency of contact with local (Dutch) family	.031 (.230)	.131 (.264)
Share of mother tongue friends	.028 (.011)**	.017 (.012)
Share of majority language friends	-.009 (.009)	-.011 (.010)
Mother tongue European partner (ref: Other European languages)		
German	1.019 (.532)*	1.171 (.579)*
English	2.191 (.658)***	1.696 (.723)*
French	1.102 (.735)	.818 (.783)
Spanish	1.965 (.892)*	1.417 (1.014)
Control variables		
Age	.207 (1.030)	.381 (1.143)
Age^2	-.006 (.013)	-.008 (.015)
Age at first birth	.154 (.060)**	.166 (.066)**
Migration duration (ref: 16 years or more)		
2-5 years	.723 (.734)	.350 (.845)
6-10 years	1.039 (.732)	.857 (.789)
11-15 years	.855 (.578)	.733 (.621)
Couple language use (ref: Dutch)		
Minority language		2.788 (.813)***
Third language		2.954 (1.289)*
Chi-square	(20) 108.11***	(22) 131.86***
R-square (Nagelkerke)	.53	.62
Observations	235	235

Source: EUMARR Survey.
Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$.

Discussion and Conclusions

Languages can be considered to be essential components of cultures, they both reflect and reproduce culture. As such, languages are an important tool for ensuring cultural continuity over the generations, particularly in migrant families in surroundings where the main language of communication is different from their mother tongue. In a migration context, migrants are confronted with the challenge of maintaining certain elements of their minority culture and adopting elements from the majority culture. We were interested in the individual and environmental factors that shape language use patterns in European binational households, and took the Netherlands as a case study. We specifically focused on the horizontal, oblique and vertical transmission of language use in European mixed families.

The results indeed revealed patterns of horizontal (between partners and social networks) and vertical (between parents and children) transmission of language. We did not find convincing empirical evidence, however, of oblique transmission. Furthermore, the findings suggest that language use patterns between partners and with children are influenced by a different set of factors. This does not, however, mean that these patterns are uncorrelated: we provide strong evidence for the connection between the main language used between partners and the language used for communication with their offspring. The following conclusions concerning patterns of language use among European bi-national couples can be drawn.

First, it is surprising to notice that most of the individual characteristics which we expected to correlate with the use of the majority or minority language between partners did not prove significant in the analyses, except for the relation between educational attainment and the use of a third language. This last finding, which indicated that more lowly educated people are less likely to use a third language, can simply be explained from the perspective that such individuals probably dispose of less ‘language capital’ in terms of mastering a third language, thus excluding the possibility of using one. Individual characteristics, however, appear to be more important when considering language use patterns with children. Our results revealed that minority parents more often opt for their native language if they are more highly educated. Furthermore, the findings illustrate the central role mothers often play in the vertical transmission of language, as we showed that the propensity of using the minority language with children decreases if the minority parent is male.

Second, our results provide empirical support for the idea that language use patterns, particularly between partners, are embedded within social environments wherein individuals, couples and families operate. For communication between partners, the results indicate that the propensity to use a non-Dutch European language with the native partner increases with the share of mother-tongue friends in the surrounding network, and likewise decreases with an larger share of majority-language friends in respondents' social circles. Although a similar pattern with regards to the share of mother-tongue friends could be detected for communication with respondents' offspring, this relationships did not persist when controlling for language use patterns between partners. The presented results hence reveal the horizontal transmission of language in social environments, but do not provide convincing empirical support for the existence of oblique transmission.

Third, our results suggest that the status of languages plays a role in choosing which language to use in European bi-national families. As indicated in the first part of this paper, not all languages have the same 'market value'. Households involving a German-speaking partner appear to be less likely to use a third language compared to those involving other European languages, and are more likely to use German for communication with their children. This finding might be related to the fact that Dutch and German are quite similar languages. German movers in the Netherlands might therefore face fewer barriers in learning the majority language, and find it easier to pass on this language to their offspring in an environment characterized by a language with a similar structure. Interestingly, English-, French-, and Spanish-speaking intra-EU movers are also more likely to use their own language or a third language for communication (except the English-speaking) with their partner. This might be due to the relative status of these languages in the world, particularly English, which if often denominated as the only true global language (Crystal 2003), but also to the fact that these languages are often also spoken by other European populations. The propensity to meet and partner with a European knowing one of these languages is higher compared to other languages. Similar findings were found for communication with children. For those minority parent speaking English or German, the two most widely spoken language in Europe (European Commission 2012), a significant correlation with the use of this language with their offspring is detected. This indicates that vertical transmission of the mother tongue to the offspring might also be related to the relative status of the EU-mover's native language on a European and global scale.

Although our data shed a unique light on language transmission processes of European migrants, some limitations apply. First, our data did not allow us to investigate

language proficiency levels of parents and children. Such insights, however, would be relevant, as research already indicates that speaking two languages at home does not guarantee full bilingualism for the children (De Houwer 2007; Li 2006). Future research among European migrant populations could broaden the current research project, taking into account language proficiency levels of parents and children. Second, we only dispose of data of European migrants with a native partner. It might be interesting to compare these couples with European bi-national couples consisting of two Europeans of different nationalities as well, as the patterns of language use in such families might be even more complicated. After all, they have to negotiate among three or possibility four languages (two minority languages, a possible third language and the majority language). Third, our analyses are based on cross-sectional data. As a result, we are not able to detect any causal relations. Fourth, partners and children were not surveyed, which forces us to rely upon the self-reported data of one partner in the couple only. For a more holistic understanding of language transmission processes, however, it would be relevant to map the preferences, proficiency level and usage of all members of binational families.

In conclusion, our results show that language use within bi-national households is not taking place in a vacuum. Instead, the findings presented in this paper reveal that language use patterns should be situated within the wider environments in which they are formed. Intra-EU movers thus seem to be similar to other non-European migrant groups that were studied before: irrespective of origin, migrants intend to preserve and pass on their native language on to their children in a foreign context. Given the high value that the European Commission places upon multilingualism, binational families should be seen as an important group for further investigations on the construction of a European society from below.

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The Erasmus programme is generally considered the flagship of intra-European exchange programmes in higher education, with more than 3 million participants since 1987. Whereas a number of studies investigated the determinants of student mobility decisions, no knowledge exists on the main destination cities of European exchange students. Our research note exactly aims at filling this gap in the academic literature. Making use of a unique dataset from the European Commission containing micro-level data on the full population of Erasmus students for study purposes in 2012-2013 (n = 211,267), we provide a descriptive overview of the spatial distribution of Erasmus students at the city level. The results reveal that European exchange students are mainly attracted by capitals and second tier metropolitan cities. Furthermore, the analysis reveals significant variation regarding the main region of origin of mobile students within most destination countries.

The Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) is an institute for the scientific study of population. NIDI research aims to contribute to the description, analysis and explanation of demographic trends in the past, present and future, both on a national and an international scale. The determants and social consequences of these trends are also studied.

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