CHAPTER 6
Family Language Policy in a Xenophobic Context: The Case of Kalanga Transnational Families in South Africa

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Abstract
Due to globalisation and people's mobility, transnational families have become a common feature worldwide. As they settle in host countries, a diminished need and opportunities to use their heritage languages usually follow. This tendency places pressure on immigrant languages, particularly in countries that do not support their teaching in education. In highly ethnicised and racialised contexts like South Africa, parents' transnational experiences impact decisions regarding language use in identity construction in the host country. This study examines the family language policies of three transnational Zimbabwean Kalanga families in South Africa. It reveals how their language transactions, negotiations and contestations are enmeshed with considerations of the ever-present xenophobic sentiment in South African society. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with parents from three focal Zimbabwean families of Kalanga heritage. The findings show that parents' experiences of xenophobia in South Africa shape their language acquisition decisions for their children in considerable ways. The preference for acquiring and using Zulu and English at the expense of Kalanga is motivated by parents' desire and aspiration for their children's assimilation into a South African identity to minimise exposure to xenophobic attacks, for children's schooling and general upward social mobility. Findings also suggest that transnationalism presents challenges

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for the intergenerational transmission of Kalanga within the focal families. Given that Kalanga is already minoritised and marginalised in Zimbabwe, characterised by diminished use in public and official domains, parents' language ideologies are key to its revitalisation, and the family domain is critical in that endeavour. Therefore, this study contributes to understanding the dynamics of intergenerational language transmission among transnational families, particularly those in hostile contexts.

Keywords: family language policy, transnational families Kalanga, language practices, xenophobia, South Africa

1 Introduction

The overall mobility of populations across national and continental borders has become a major defining feature of the 20th century (Schwartz 2008). One major outcome of this mobility has been the proliferation of transnational families, particularly in countries offering the promise and allure of better opportunities. According to Ndhlovu (2009a), Families in immigration contexts are usually faced with several dilemmas relating to their language transactions and identity negotiations, particularly in contexts where their heritage languages have no recognisable status, and opportunities to learn them are not readily available and formally supported. Despite the pervasive nature of this phenomenon, few studies have been done to understand how transnational families articulate and negotiate their family language policies in the new environs. Given that social, economic and political conditions and experiences differ according to host countries, there is a need to:

> […] understand what is going on within such families; how their transnational and multilingual experiences impact on the family dynamics and their everyday life; how they cope with the new and ever-changing environment; and how they construct their identities and build social relations (Hua & Wei 2016: 655).

However, some studies have been done to understand the trajectories of intergenerational heritage language transmission, language maintenance and loss (Kasatkina 2011) and to examine how transnational families deploy family language policy to assimilate into the host country. Apart from examining how

transnational families preserve their heritage languages for their symbolic importance (Seloni & Sarfati 2013), other studies have investigated the dispositions by parents and other authorities within the family, in its various forms, to raise children bilingually and to develop 'a good knowledge of the languages of the new resident country as it would enable members of the transnational family to access services, education and employment' (Hua & Wei 2016:657).

There has been little interest in examining the dynamics of family language policies of transnational families in xenophobic contexts. To address this gap, this study focuses on three Zimbabwean transnational Kalanga families in South Africa to understand how they construct, articulate, and negotiate their family language policies against the backdrop of increasing xenophobic sentiment present in various levels of South African society. The study reveals how family language policies of the focal families are related to parents' experiences of xenophobia in South Africa. We then attempt to connect these explicitly reported family language practices and family language policies with the intergenerational trajectories of the Kalanga heritage language within focal families. Kalanga is a marginalised and minoritised indigenous language in Zimbabwe and Botswana. Given this, the widespread immigration of Zimbabwean Kalanga speakers into South Africa presents challenges for its intergenerational transmission and maintenance. Without proper government support for immigrant languages, and because of the attendant sociolinguistic situation, the family becomes the only possible support for the language's intergenerational transmission. Writing on how to reverse language shift among linguistic minorities, Fishman (1991) identified the use of the minority language at home among all three generations as the most critical element of language maintenance. It is so because the home 'acts like a natural boundary and a bulwark against outside pressures' (Schwartz & Verschik 2013:2). However, the family is never completely closed off or protected from community-wide language ideologies, some of which are related to the prevailing socio-political situation. In xenophobic and ethnicised contexts like South Africa, how immigrant families negotiate and instantiate their language practices is, to some degree, a function of the prevailing social formation.

In light of the above, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What kind of family language policies are Kalanga transnational families pursuing in a xenophobic context in South Africa?

- How are these family language policies related to parents' experiences of xenophobia and language ideologies in South Africa?

- What implications do these family language policies have for the intergenerational transmission of Kalanga?

Inclusive of the introduction, this chapter is divided into eight sections. In the following section, the context of the study is presented and described. It is followed by an analysis of the conceptual lens that frames the study and a description of relevant literature. The study's methodology is then outlined and discussed, then succeeded by presenting the findings. The authors discuss the findings in the penultimate section, followed by the conclusion.

2 Research Context

The findings presented in this study are based on interviews with parents of three focal Zimbabwean families of Kalanga heritage in South Africa. Siziba (2013) notes that Zimbabweans are generally dispersed worldwide due to several decades-long economic and political crises. Out of different destinations, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada, South Africa stands out as the most convenient destination because of its proximity and accessibility to Zimbabwe (Siziba 2013). Between 3.5 million to 4 million Zimbabweans are estimated to reside in South Africa (Sisulu, Moyo & Tshuma 2007). Until recently, most Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa have been from the country's South-Western parts. Some have settled almost permanently, having set up families. Because these families still maintain contact with family and friends in Zimbabwe, and back-and-forth cross-border mobility remains a feature of their experiences, we refer to them as transnational families instead of migrant or immigrant families to acknowledge that reality (Hua & Wei 2016). Kalanga speakers from Zimbabwe constitute a significant percentage of the Zimbabwean transnational population in South Africa.

Kalanga is one of Zimbabwe's 16 officially recognised languages (Government of Zimbabwe 2013; Nkomo & Maseko 2017). It is spoken in the South-Western parts of Zimbabwe, covering Bulilima, Mangwe, Plumtree and Tsholotsho districts (Ndhlovu 2009b). These are some of Zimbabwe's most socially and economically marginalised regions, characterised by extreme

poverty, inexistent infrastructure and low literacy levels. The language is marginalised in official spaces and has not been taught in schools for a long time (Maseko & Mutasa 2018). Kalanga speakers and those of several other minoritised languages in parts of Matabeleland provinces continue to subordinate to the politically dominant Shona and Ndebele groups. Speakers of Kalanga generally coalesce under the Ndebele collective identity for political expediency, owing to their long and somewhat harmonious coexistence with the Ndebele people dating back to pre-colonial times (Msindo 2005; Maseko & Dhlamini 2020). However, this coexistence has not been without its low points. There have been occasional tensions where Kalanga speakers have expressed the need to free themselves from Ndebele hegemony. Ndhlovu (2009b) has shown how the colonial hand contributed to the present ethnolinguistic dynamics in post-colonial Zimbabwe, particularly how Clement Doke's recommendations that Ndebele be the only indigenous language taught in schools in Matabeleland marked the genesis of Kalanga marginalisation (Msindo 2005; Ndhlovu 2009b). Resultantly, Kalanga speakers have been forced to contend with this structuring of power and the dominance of English, Shona and Ndebele languages.

The exodus to South Africa is a response to this marginalisation for many reasons. The late former president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, in one of his many unprovoked diatribes aimed at Zimbabweans in South Africa, unwittingly acknowledged this reality when he rebuked Kalanga people for what he described as an aversion to education which led them to abandon their country and settle in South Africa where they commit petty crimes (Newsday 2015). We consider Mugabe's jibe insensitive given his 1980s genocidal misadventures, which left the South-Western parts of the country with poor educational facilities and employment opportunities before the sustained shortcomings of his government resulted in the economic meltdown that compelled the Zimbabwean exodus (Siziba 2013).

While the allure of South Africa promises opportunity and a better life, the shrinking economic space has amplified competition for employment and other resources between the locals and immigrants. It has often resulted in violent attacks on immigrants by locals, ostensibly to drive them back to their home countries, hopefully freeing up jobs they are thought to occupy. These attacks have commonly come to be known as 'xenophobic attacks' although some have preferred the term 'Afrophobia' (Kgari-Masondo & Masondo 2019). In most cases, it is African immigrants from countries such as Zimbabwe,

Nigeria, Mozambique, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who have been targeted. In contrast, white and Asian immigrants from other parts of the world are spared (Kgari-Masondo & Masondo 2019). During these attacks, the language issue has often come to the fore. South Africa is multilingual, with 12 official languages, including the recently officialised South African Sign Language. As an identity marker, language has, in many cases, provided 'the supporting armory' (Kgari-Masondo & Masondo 2019: 87) for xenophobia and has been manipulated in the service of threat construction and hatred during the attacks (Kgari-Masondo & Masondo 2019). Failure to speak intelligibly in local languages tends to mark one as an outsider and puts a target on their back. With its shifting shades of meaning, the term '*amakwerekwere*' has been expressly reserved as a derogatory reference for African immigrants 'who speak unintelligible languages' (Kgari-Masondo & Masondo 2019; Siziba 2013). In some unfortunate situations, speakers of minoritised South African languages such as Tshivenda and Xitsonga have been mistaken for foreigners by dominant Sotho and Nguni groups. Siziba (2013) observes how Ndebele-speaking Zimbabweans in South Africa profit from their mutual linguistic intelligibility with the Zulu to navigate this label by approximating Zulu's linguistic and cultural identity. Unlike Ndebele, Kalanga does not share significant mutual intelligibility with any of the South African languages.

3 Conceptual Framework

3.1 Family Language Policy

The concept of family language policy undergirds this study. It is an approach that is gaining traction in applied linguistics and language policy studies as researchers seek to understand how 'languages are managed, learned, and negotiated within families' (King, Fogle & Logan-Terry 2008:907) especially in 'the presence of at least two languages in the child's immediate socio-cultural environment' (Smith-Christmas 2014:511). It is defined as explicit and overt planning concerning language use within the home among family members (King, Fogle & Logan-Terry 2008; Shohamy 2006). Macalister and Mirvahedi (2017) contend that family language policy should be extended to encompass implicit and unconscious decisions about language use within the family in its subtle forms. To that end, they aver that:

> Family language policy, then, is concerned with the dynamics of language use within the family (which should be read as meaning not contemporary western-style nuclear family but rather 'family' in its many diverse manifestations) and the factors both internal and external, that affect that use (Macalister & Mirvahedi 2017: 4).

Language policy is a notion that pervades almost all societal levels, including the family (Spolsky 2004; 2009). Because the family forms the most inescapable basis for heritage language maintenance, it is a domain relevant to language policy (Schwartz & Verschik 2013). Like other language policies, family language policy is underpinned by three interrelated components. These are its practices, ideologies and management (Spolsky 2004; 2009). What the family does with the languages in its linguistic repertoire constitutes practices, while ideologies are what the family believes must be done. Management relates to the conscious steps or strategies deployed by powerful family figures or authorities, typically parents, to influence the language practices of less powerful members, typically children (Spolsky 2004; 2009). For this study, the authors draw on the family language policy concept to explain how selected transnational Zimbabwean Kalanga families in South Africa articulate and negotiate their family language policies in their transnational experiences in a xenophobic environment. We show how these families are predisposed to choose between their heritage languages for symbolic and identity purposes or to assimilate to the majority language practices of the host country for instrumental and security purposes. According to (Curdt-Christiansen 2013:1), the family language policy approach is deployed to understand questions such as:

> Why (and how) do members of some transnational families maintain their language while members of other families lose their language? How is it that some children, growing up in a largely monolingual society, become bilinguals while other children, growing up in a bilingual environment, become monolinguals? What policies and practices do parents implement to promote or discourage the use and practice of particular languages? And how are these language policies and practices negotiated in private domains, and concomitantly, related to broader ideologies of language?

Given the above, the authors support the view of the family as an important

language policy domain whose language practices, ideologies and management are central to the intergenerational transmission of heritage languages (Spolsky 2004; 2009). The family is, however, not entirely closed off or insulated from language practices and ideologies circulating in the community at large (Schwartz & Verschik 2013). For example, Bourdieu (1991) deploys economic notions of linguistic capital and linguistic markets to demonstrate that various socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and ideological factors motivate the use and learning of certain languages and not others. This study also advances that extra-familial language experiences and ideologies in a xenophobic context may impact how transnational families manage and negotiate language and linguistic identities. Locating the study within this approach sheds light on how the focal families use their linguistic capital to construct new or maintain old identities while negotiating xenophobia-related language prejudices and stereotypes in South Africa. Building on this insight, we expose how family language policy is more than a 'neutral and uncontested state of private affairs' (Curdt-Christiansen 2013:1) but is shaped by the prevailing economic, socio-cultural and political realities. Although the family has long been considered the private and backstage of social life, the line between the private and public is increasingly blurred because of globalisation, technological advancement and transnationalism (Hua & Wei 2016).

4 Literature Review

Although family language policy is a nascent offshoot in language planning and language policy studies (King, Fogle & Logan Terry 2008), it is quickly gaining traction. It has begun to arouse interest from scholars researching language policies in immigration contexts. Most studies have focused on how immigrant families, particularly in Europe, America, and Asia, negotiate their family language policies to foster the maintenance of their heritage languages (Hua & Wei 2016; Kasatkina 2011; Seloni & Sarfati 2013). Among the many topical themes, some studies revolve around understanding how family language ideologies influence the nature and direction of family language policy in indigenous and immigration contexts (Maseko 2021; 2022; Maseko & Mutasa 2018; Pérez Baez 2013; Seloni & Sarfati 2013). Other studies have centred on how parents' aspirations for their children's educational success and needs influence parents' orientations towards children's multilingual development trajectories and language socialisation (Hua & Wei 2016; Luykx 2005; Said & Zhu 2019).

Hua and Wei (2016) studied three multilingual Chinese families living in Britain to expose how the transnational experiences of different generations in each family correlated with their attitudes and perceptions about bilingualism and multilingualism. Hua and Wei (2016) also showed how these differences related to their nuanced constructions and presentations of their identities and social relations (Hua & Wei 2016). They demonstrated how different socio-cultural experiences of individuals within the same family impacted family relations and language policy. Hua and Wei (2016) illuminate the present study in several ways. First, it lends insights into the centrality of immigrants' socio-cultural experiences in constructing and articulating family language policy. It also demonstrates the extent to which family language policy is a complex affair enmeshed with individual members' experiences as they negotiate new identities and challenge prejudices and stereotypes in navigating the language ecology in the host country (Hua & Wei 2016). The study also reveals family language policy's responsiveness to different ideologies and beliefs shaped by 'experiences, histories, imaginations, why they (speakers) feel the way they feel and why they do things the way they do' (Hua & Wei 2016: 656).

Schwartz (2008) investigated factors impacting first language maintenance among second-generation Russian-Jewish immigrants in Israel. The study participants comprised 70 Russian-Hebrew-speaking children with a mean age of seven years and two months (Schwartz 2008). Drawing on Spolsky's (2004) model of language policy, she sought to understand how specific family language management interventions influenced bilingual children's mother tongue (L1) vocabulary development skills (Schwartz 2008). The findings of this study validated the important role of teaching the first language in formal and non-formal educational settings and the importance of children's positive attitudes and dispositions towards their home language in fostering language maintenance (Schwartz 2008).

Similarly, Kasatkina (2011) unpacked how some Russian immigrants from the former Soviet Union living in the United States of America (USA) were able to maintain their mother language in a country that did not support multilingualism for immigrants (Kasatkina 2011). The study unravelled how maintaining the Russian heritage language was linked to speakers' dispositions and attitudes towards Russian. By deploying the Integrated Public Microdata Series (IPUMAS) (Kasatkina 2013:35), she discovered that dispositions toward the maintenance of Russian by immigrants were discordant with increased opportunities for communication. For example, the study showed how the

influx of Russian-speaking immigrants into the United States between 1990 and 2000 did not correlate with an increased desire to maintain the language (Kasatkina 2011). Importantly, it is inferred from the findings that maintaining heritage languages in immigrant contexts is related to several other factors beyond the demographic, including prevailing conditions in the host country during the period of immigration (Kasatkina 2011). However, without explicitly deploying the family language policy approach, she explains how the loss of Russian by the general immigrant population was reproduced and reified within the family milieu through their language practices and management.

Addressing the question of agency in family language policy, Luykx (2005) examined the importance of children as agents of their language socialisation. In the process, she showed how children's practices impacted family language policy in ways that turned on its head the view that has traditionally cast parents as 'experts' and children as 'novices' in language socialisation (Duff 2010). Drawing on the concepts of family language policy and language socialisation, Luykx (2005) studied family language policies of Quechua-speaking families in Bolivia to understand how children's language practices and experiences influenced parents' language negotiations, thereby showing how children can no longer be viewed as passive novices in language socialisation (Fogle & King 2013). Luykx (2005) suggests that parental aspirations for children's education and economic advantage can lead parents to capitulate to children's preference to use the majority language, thereby placing themselves in a linguistically subservient position at home. Deploying an ethnographic approach, Said and Zhu (2019) also studied mealtime interactions of a transnational English and Arabic bilingual family in the United Kingdom to understand how children creatively mobilised their multiple linguistic repertoires to 'assert their agency in language use and socialisation and why these acts of agency are conducive to successful maintenance of the so-called 'home', 'community' or 'minority' language' (Said & Zhu 2019:771).

Both studies powerfully demonstrate the importance of children's agency in family language policy and how this agency is linked to parental aspirations for children's assimilation into majority language practices. Fogle and King (2013) also reported similar findings from three studies of different kinds of transnational families: three English-Russian adoptive families, two Spanish-English bilingual families and one Ecuadorian immigrant family. They also suggest that family language policy is '… a constant, ongoing and effortful notion that is understood and enacted in specific ways that suit the family' (Said

& Zhu 2019:782). Similarly, Kheirkhah (2016) also explored family interactions in five bi- and multilingual Iranian immigrant families in Sweden to expose how family language policies are never cast in stone but are subject to negotiation and instantiation in parent-child interactions (Kheirkhah 2016).

Seloni and Sarfati (2013) demonstrated how the host country's national language policy might affect transnational families' dispositions toward their heritage languages. For example, they showed how the amelioration of the Turkish language and identity contributed to the demise and endangerment of Judeo-Spanish among Jews in Turkey. Seloni and Sarfati (2013) found that the reciprocal interaction between societal language ideologies and family internal language practices was central to that endangerment (Seloni & Sarfati 2013). The opening of Alliance schools, which were used to promote the national *Turkification* ideology, packaged in the exclusionary 'Citizen Speak Turkish!' slogan to cultivate Turkish monolingualism effectively relegated to the margins, alternative ways of being thereby engendering negative attitudes towards Judeo-Spanish. These attitudes tended to permeate the family milieu and be reproduced in the family language policies. Importantly, Seloni and Sarfati (2013) demonstrate how family language policies of transnational families are seldom immune to community and state language ideologies. Although parents' language awareness and language ideologies are central to the articulation of family language policy, community and national language ideologies may diminish their 'impact beliefs' (De Houwer 2009), resulting in their giving in to the dominant language practices. Impact beliefs are the convictions that parents have regarding their potential to influence the language practices of their children (Pérez Báez 2013). Because impact beliefs are linked to levels of language awareness and loyalty, the most important factors impacting language maintenance or shift (Ravindranath 2009), strong impact beliefs engender in the parents a resolve to articulate heritage-language-centred family language policies. Pérez Báez (2013) showed how weak impact beliefs among speakers of San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec (SLQZ), a language spoken by Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles, precipitated into language shift. Their family language policies reproduced extra familial language ideologies and practices of the Los Angeles community, much like Seloni and Sarfati's (2013) findings which suggest that many transnational families' family language policies resonate with the host community's prevailing socio-political realities.

In the African context, the field of family language policy remains largely underexplored. However, this seems to be changing as scholars seek to

understand the involvement of family institutions in language revitalisation and how language practices and ideologies impact the trajectory of intergenerational language transmission of minoritised indigenous languages (Maseko 2021; Maseko and Mutasa 2018; 2019). No study known to the authors has been done to understand the family language policy of any Zimbabwean transnational and diaspora communities in a xenophobic context. Recent studies have focused on the emotional aspects of family language policy in post-conflict and post-genocide contexts. Maseko (2022) suggests that the family language policy is deployed as a coping and defence mechanism by survivors of the Gukurahundi genocide in Zimbabwe. The study shows how a strictly pro-Ndebele family language policy was motivated by the focal family's language experiences during the Gukurahundi genocide of the 1980s.

Although not couched in the family language policy approach, Siziba (2013) has shown how Zimbabwean immigrants in South Africa deploy language as capital entry fees in negotiating their identities in the context of xenophobia. He suggests that Ndebele-speaking Zimbabwean migrants easily assimilate into the Zulu identity because of the mutual cultural and linguistic ties with Zulu speakers. However, Shona-speaking immigrants face challenges because of a linguistic and cultural distance from the major South African Nguni linguistic groups. Siziba (2013) sheds light on the importance of language as a transacting currency in navigating identity politics among immigrant populations in South Africa but does not show how that impacts language ideologies and management at the family level. Another more relevant work is Kamuangu (2006), who sought to understand how immigrant families from the DRC articulated their family language policies in conversation with the broader extra-familial language practices in South African schools. Kamuangu (2006) demonstrated how family language policies of immigrant DRC families are infused with considerations of identity. Family language policies are also shown to be mediated by family members' feelings of marginalisation and exclusion in the quest to fit into the host society and acquire material resources (Kamuangu 2006).

5 Research Methodology

Family language policy is a nuanced and muddled notion that responds to spatial and contextual variables (Macalister & Mirvahedi 2017). Predictably, it is also characterised by diverse methodological approaches (Schwartz and Ver-

schik 2013). Most previous studies have deployed qualitative methodological lines of inquiry by interviewing members of focal families, typically parents (Maseko & Mutasa 2018; 2019). Some used ethnographic methods (Hua & Wei 2016; Smith-Christmas 2014). Fewer studies have triangulated qualitative and quantitative approaches (Kasatkina 2011; Schwartz & Moin 2011).

The present study adopted a qualitative approach to collect, present and analyse data. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Three transnational Kalanga heritage families living in Johannesburg were purposively selected to participate in the study. Although Zimbabwean immigrants are found throughout South Africa, most are concentrated in Johannesburg (Siziba 2013). The first author approached a contact and acquaintance of Kalanga heritage whose family was also enrolled in this study. The initial family was selected because of its known Kalanga heritage. The contact referred two other families with similar profiles who could participate in the study to grow the sample. Both parents in the focal families had to be of Kalanga heritage, irrespective of their competence in the Kalanga language. The selected families had to have at least one child attending school in South Africa. The focal families were designated Family#1, Family#2 and Family#3, using the chronology of the interviews to adhere to the ethics of confidentiality. Pre-interview discussions were done where parents were afforded the latitude to choose who, between the mother and the father, would represent the family in the interview. A more detailed profile of each family is given in the findings section. An interview guide was generated to guide the interviews. The fathers represented Family#1 and Family#2, whereas the mother represented Family#3. Participants informed consent was sought before the interviews. The researchers explained the study's nature, purpose, and procedures for ensuring participants' confidentiality. Interviews were conducted in English and were audio-recorded and later transcribed. Some field notes were also made as the interviews progressed. Through principles of thematic analysis, interview transcripts and field notes were iteratively studied to distil major themes emerging from the data. Data analysis was treated as an ongoing and iterative activity throughout the different stages of the research. It involved moving back and forth between interview transcripts, field notes, the literature, and the conceptual lens to establish how these components spoke to each other. In presenting the data, participants' voices were foregrounded using verbatim responses. Participants were also invited to comment on the interview transcripts to ensure that the content reflected their views. These procedures ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

6 Parents' Reflections on Language Experiences in South Africa and Family Language Policy

6.1 Family Language Policy in Flux: The Case of Family#1

Family#1 is a family of four. Both parents immigrated to South Africa from Zimbabwe in January 2008, at the height of Zimbabwe's economic meltdown, infamously referred to as the lost decade. The father is a 42-year-old professional counsellor, while the mother is a 38-eight-year-old community development practitioner. They have two daughters, aged nine and four. The father can speak, understand and write Kalanga very well, while the mother possesses intermediate proficiencies in the language. The two children, born in South Africa, 'have very limited proficiencies in Kalanga' (interview with the father). Both the mother and father are fluent in English and Ndebele and can also speak Zulu proficiently. They did not experience any significant Kalanga in formal education in Zimbabwe, and much of the language they know is either self-taught or acquired from the community. For much of their schooling, they were exposed to English as the language of instruction and Ndebele as an indigenous language subject.

Although there is no explicitly articulated family language policy within Family#1, parents, particularly the father, are concerned with the children's language development and would like to see the children learn to speak Kalanga. As a result, he often exposes children to concepts related to the Kalanga language and culture. This is revealed in the excerpt below:

> *I have been motivated to teach my family my language as it is one thing that will help us keep our heritage. I try to teach them, but progress is slow. I use every little opportunity I get to use my language. I also have put together a collection of Kalanga music and literature which I also try and expose my children to.*

Although the father's language ideologies have influenced him to expose the children to Kalanga, the competing alternatives in the linguistic market of South Africa have posed some difficulties to the preferred family language policy and practices within Family#1. For example, the school language policy was thought to impact children's language preferences even within the home, such that they prefer Zulu and English and not so much Kalanga. This has led to a weaker and less effective family language policy as parents also give in to their children's language preferences. The father therefore observed:

> *Unfortunately, we don't really have a language policy to enforce the use of Kalanga in our home. Every effort is made for them to understand and use the language in a rather informal way mainly by talking to them and teaching them alternative Kalanga terms and names for things in the house, playing Kalanga music and via social media platforms.*

The father further described how South Africa's education language policy impacted the direction and trajectory of the use of Kalanga at home:

> *The main reason for not enforcing the language at home is that South Africa has more than nine official languages and our children get exposed to about four to five languages in their schooling environment. So, you find a child having to do homework for English, Zulu and Afrikaans, while at school the same child interacts with children that speak Xhosa, Sotho or Sepedi. So, for us having to strictly enforce the Kalanga language will be an 'overload' on them. So, for now they will be learning the other South African languages as it gives them a competitive advantage at school and boosts their confidence*.

Besides children's schooling being one of the main extra familial language experiences leading to an infective Kalanga-centred family language policy, experiences of xenophobia and other related transnational 'otherings' also made parents cautious about their language use in public spaces, subsequently importing that caution into the home. For example, the father explained how his experiences of xenophobia, in May 2008, within five months of immigrating to South Africa, made him think differently about language. He recalled how he felt unsafe and scared to speak in public, fearing that 'my Kalanga accent would betray my identity'. He also revealed how he would sometimes avoid going to work, especially at the height of the xenophobic attacks in 2008:

> *My work involves working with communities and at times I would get people questioning why foreigners are bringing services. I would avoid going to work. In some instances, I got called names simply because of the accent, because the Kalanga language has a tone that one cannot miss. So, I may be speaking any official South African language but still be labelled a kwerekwere because of the accent.*

Because of the associated labelling that comes with speaking a foreign lang-

uage, the father explained how, after their first child was born, the family initially wanted to socialise her into the Zulu language and culture because of its proximity to the Zimbabwean Ndebele. This decision was meant to help their child to assimilate into a new identity that would shield her from being a potential target of future xenophobic sentiments and attacks. However, he explained how that disposition weakened a few years after acclimatising to the South African atmosphere, leading them to revise their family language policy by teaching Kalanga to their children, despite the ever-present threat of xenophobia. He recalled thus:

> *Because of our experiences of xenophobia in the first few months of moving to South Africa, we wanted our firstborn to learn to speak Zulu. We were also trying to protect her from xenophobia so even at home we used Zulu when speaking to her. Maybe that is why when we eventually got used to South Africa, it seemed it was a bit too late to start using Kalanga with her at home.*

Distilling from the above, the early family language policy in Family#1 initially responded to parents' experiences and fears of anti-foreigner sentiment during their early years in South Africa and the desire for their children's assimilation into a South African identity and satisfy educational demands. These experiences compelled parents to reify a Zulu-centred family language policy. Although parents later revised their family language policy to foreground the Kalanga language, by the father's admission, the damage had already been done regarding the children's acquisition of Kalanga. These decisions show that the family language policy in Family#1 has been in flux over the years, mainly in response to the family's language experiences in South Africa. As the family acclimatised to South African society, the weakening of their fears led them to revise their language ideologies by incorporating their Kalanga heritage language into their language practices later.

6.2 A Family in Shift: Contradictory Language Ideologies and Practices in Family#2

Family#2 comprises the father, a 45-year-old construction project manager, the mother, a 38-year-old beauty therapist and two children. The children are boys aged 11 and eight, born in South Africa. The family migrated to South Africa

in 2005 for better employment and living conditions, just like Family#1. The father speaks and understands Kalanga fairly well, while the mother has limited Kalanga speaking and understanding abilities. The children do not speak nor understand the language. Both the mother and the father are fluent in English, Ndebele and Zulu but have no experience of formal Kalanga learning during their school years as they learnt English and Ndebele.

Unlike Family#1, this family does not seem enthused to pass on their Kalanga language to the children, despite their awareness regarding the signifycance of their language, culture and heritage. To demonstrate this awareness, the father observed thus:

> *We are aware that our heritage language is an important vehicle of preserving our culture, but sometimes we are faced with serious obstacles here in South Africa. If you don't speak a South African language, you are easily identified as a foreigner and you can be killed for it. This discourages us to use our mother tongue and we are forced to use South African languages. We also teach these to our children at home.*

The above excerpt shows that within Family#2, security and safety in the host country are of primary concern, taking precedence over linguistic and cultural identity preservation. In the following excerpt, the father admits that the family has succumbed to xenophobic pressures by eliminating the use of Kalanga at home.

> *The environment in which we live in South Africa dictates that we should not use our mother language in communication. It follows that a local language like Zulu is now the home language. Kids are strictly taught not to use their original language as this might expose who they are.*

Discerning this expressed ideology explicitly, parents in this family do not possess strong impact beliefs to go against what the wider society perceives as unmarked language practices. In cases like Family#2, parents usually give in to socio-political pressures by embracing community-wide language choices considered less marked. The use of Zulu as an alternative for Kalanga in Family#2 points to a language shift in progress, thus presenting a negative prognosis for Kalanga in this family. The fact that the mother and father in

Family#2 are not entirely fluent in Kalanga compounds matters. At best, for Family#2, if Kalanga had to be learnt by children at all, it would be for use in interactions with family members back home in Zimbabwe during the family's frequent transnational encounters. As the father noted:

> *It could be a nice thing to have kids learning to speak Kalanga, not for use in South Africa but for use back home in Zimbabwe when we visit. Unfortunately, we have no means of acquiring any material to teach them Kalanga due to unavailability.*

The acquisition of Kalanga by the children and its utilisation within the family is not a primary imperative for this family but rather an unforeseen option and potential outcome that was never deliberately planned for. The attitude towards securing learning materials to help children acquire Kalanga is, at best, non-committal as there appear to be no efforts to acquire such materials, compared to Family#1. As such, language management and family language policy in Family#2 foreground using dominant South African languages such as Zulu and English. English is encouraged because it is the main language of instruction in schools in South Africa, and its acquisition by children presents opportunities. Children in this family also have an affinity for the English language 'because it is cool and because their friends are from different countries, so when they play, they speak English'. It also suggests that parental aspirations for the children's assimilation into a South African identity led to articulating a Zulu and English-dominant family language policy in Family#2. Although the parents are aware of the importance of the heritage language, findings suggest that their practices and family language policy contradict their ideologies. The influence of extra-familial ideologies and practices accounts for this contradiction.

6.3 Reproducing the South African Linguistic Market in Family#3

Family#3 comprises a 44-year-old father, who works for a fast-food chain and a 39-year-old mother, who runs her own events management company. They have three children: a boy aged 13 and two girls aged nine and six, respectively. The father moved to South Africa in 2003 and the mother in 2004, for the same reasons as did Family#1 and Family#2. The mother and father speak and understand Kalanga well, while the older boy child has limited speaking and

understanding abilities. The two younger sisters do not speak or understand Kalanga. Both parents also speak English and Zulu fluently. As with the parents of the first two families, the parents also had no formal Kalanga learning. They also experienced being taught in English for most of their schooling while Ndebele was their indigenous language subject.

Family#3 also does not overtly enforce the speaking of Kalanga, but according to the mother, they happily embrace all languages spoken within the community. This ideological stance deliberately promotes and supports children's multilingual development. The following response of the mother captures the pro-multilingual family language policy embraced by Family#2:

> *At home my husband and I are not very strict with the children in terms of what language to use. Children can use any language they want. That's why they speak many languages like English, Zulu, Ndebele, Sotho and a bit of Afrikaans. The older boy can speak a bit of Kalanga as well. When he was born, we were excited about him as an heir, and we wanted him to learn Kalanga. We used to speak Kalanga with him, but we soon gave up because he seemed to prefer to use more of Zulu and English as he grew. The two girls do not speak or understand Kalanga.*

Language practices in Family#3 typically reproduce the general South African linguistic market, which embraces multilingualism and values different languages differently. The preference for the use of English and Zulu by children also reproduces their language experiences at school and in the community. Akin to Family#1 and Family#2, parents in this family also allow their children to speak the dominant South African languages for schooling and assimilation into a new identity to avoid being labelled as 'amakwerekwere'. Parents' extra familial language experiences also influence their decision to use South African languages with their children at home. The following excerpt demonstrates how parents' xenophobic encounters influence their family language policy:

> *My husband and I were once threatened by a group of men who told us to go back to our home country. I think our accent told them that we are foreigners. Since then, I am more careful about what language I use when in public. I feel it is not safe to speak Kalanga. Even if I meet other Kalangas, I use Zulu instead which is spoken in Johannesburg to avoid any unnecessary attention to my nationality and language. It's*

> *safer for children to learn these languages of South Africa as well.*

The mother of Family#3 also explained how she even avoids using Kalanga in telephone conversations with relatives back in Zimbabwe:

> *While I have never directly experienced physical harm because of xenophobic incidences, I am cautious about using Kalanga in public places. Even if my phone rings while I am in a mall or some other public place and it's my mother calling, I am bound to respond in Zulu instead of Kalanga as I normally would when in a safer space. Sometimes it can get really dangerous especially during periods when xenophobia is at its highest.*

As a result of self-censorship to use Kalanga in language-concordant telephone calls with her Kalanga-speaking mother back in Zimbabwe, the mother of Family#3 is likely to import such self-censorship into precipitating a cautious and conscious proscription of Kalanga in the home. This practice, although happening in extra-familial spaces, will likely impact the mother's language ideologies and, therefore, the family's language policy negotiations.

6 Analysis

The study's findings suggest that family language policies within transnational families are nuanced, although they share similarities that capture the sociolinguistic realities deriving from the socio-political situation. In this study, parents' articulation of family language policies is a response to the xenophobic experiences to some degree. Family language policies within the focal families are also driven by parents' aspirations for their children's success at school and assimilation into a South African linguistic and cultural identity. The study's findings also demonstrate how parents' reported language ideologies and practices within the three focal families of Kalanga heritage mainly foreground South African languages as the primary languages of communication at home at the expense of Kalanga, sometimes contradicting their language ideologies. These findings resonate with studies of transnational families in other contexts that show how socio-political and educational realities of host countries are infused into family language ideologies and practices (Fogle & King 2013; Luykx 2005; Said & Zhu 2019; Seloni & Sarfati 2013).

Although it is indicated from the findings that the three families embrace pro-multilingual family language policies, these families do not necessarily employ conscious language management that imposes sole use of Kalanga in the homes. For Family#1, however, the father tries to expose children to Kalanga music and literature to arouse their interest in learning the language. By Family#1's father's admission, however, these strategies seem to have negligible impact on children's proficiency in Kalanga and on children's practices. Family#2 and Family#3 appear to have somewhat resigned to Zulu and English dominant family language policies as an expression of their aspirations for children's assimilation into a new identity. Parents' aspirations for their children have been shown to shape the family language policies of both indigenous and transnational families in many other studies (Hua & Wei 2016; Luykx 2005; Maseko & Mutasa 2018). The parents' reflections from all three families indicate that the significant journey to South Africa is a double-edged sword, presenting unique challenges for the intergenerational transmission of Kalanga within each family. In countries that do not formally support the teaching of immigrant languages, the intergenerational trajectories of these languages are always disrupted (Pérez Báez 2013; Seloni & Sarfati 2013). For the three focal families described in this study, this rings true.

However, studies in different contexts have shown that immigrants can maintain their heritage language even if the host country does not formally support its acquisition in education (Kasatkina 2011). Kalanga is minoritised in Zimbabwe, where it is spoken as an indigenous language and marked as a 'kwerekwere' language in South Africa. Because its distinctive phonological features do not approximate any of the dominant South African Nguni languages, its speakers are prone to be marked as outsiders. It is, therefore, safer not to use it to duck the label 'amakwerekwere'. Siziba (2013) has also shown how language has been deployed as capital and entry fees in identity negotiation by Shona and Ndebele-speaking immigrants in South Africa, where Ndebele-speaking Zimbabweans enjoy some degree of safety compared to speakers of other Zimbabwean languages which share little or no mutual intelligibility with Nguni languages.

To navigate and negotiate the new language demands presented by the language in education policy, the toxically xenophobic atmosphere in South Africa led parents to permit and encourage using South African languages to camouflage their Zimbabwean Kalanga identity and reduce their markedness and chances of being targeted by xenophobic elements. Therefore, extra-

familial parents' language experiences are important in articulating family language policy within the three families. It resonates with the observation that although the intimacy associated with the family helps form a bulwark against outside forces, the family is never completely insulated from dominant language practices prevailing in the larger community (Schwartz & Verschik 2013). The contradictory ideologies and practices feed into the avowal that ideologies are not practices, although they may influence and be influenced by them (Spolsky 2004; 2009). In Zimbabwe, where Kalanga is spoken as an indigenous language, Maseko and Mutasa (2018) reveal the subservience of the language in the community and official spaces, which has been reproduced in the homes as speakers elect for the use, acquisition and spread of the politically, socially and educationally dominant Ndebele language, even in areas long considered Kalanga enclaves (Maseko & Mutasa 2018). While the three families find themselves in similar conditions, their nuanced dispositions towards their heritage language, as reflected in their family language policies, construe the idea that family language policy is a muddled, nuanced and messy affair that is seldom uniform from family to family (Macalister & Mirvahedi 2017). However, it is common that the host country's socio-political, sociolinguistic and educational realities permeate family language policy in many ways, leading parents and children to negotiate their stances and orientations towards their heritage languages.

7 Conclusion

This study focused on parents' perspectives from three Zimbabwean Kalanga families living in South Africa to understand how transnational experiences and the pervasive xenophobic atmosphere shaped their family language policies and concomitant dispositions towards their Kalanga heritage language. Although parental reports from all three families showed differing proficiency levels in the Kalanga language, socio-political pressures and educational demands in South Africa valorised the South African Zulu language and English in ways also reproduced in the focal families' homes. The desire of parents to help children escape xenophobic scrutiny also led to parents' indifference towards enforcing the use and acquisition of Kalanga in the home, particularly by children. Therefore, the three families' language policies and practices point to a language shift in progress, as very little is being done to encourage the intergenerational transmission of Kalanga in the home. Although interviewed

parents still maintain some proficiency in Kalanga, they avoid using it for ordinary conversation in public spaces opting for its use in language-concordant conversations with other family members in Zimbabwe, but only in 'safer spaces'. This study was limited to parental reports of their language experiences and family language policy in South Africa. Future studies could therefore investigate how children's own language experiences impact their negotiation of parents' explicitly and implicitly articulated family language policy. Some studies may seek to understand family language policy within intermarried families. Other studies may deploy an ethnographic approach to understanding the family language policies of other Zimbabwean immigrant groups within the context of generalised xenophobia in South Africa and other destination countries.

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