

Quantitative Analysis: Language Use Practices of First-Generation Indian Migrants in Sydney, Australia

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Abstract

Transnational migration has become a significant feature of the 21st century. It has mostly been enabled by globalisation, which has facilitated the movement of people all around the world. Once migrants settle in the host country, their primary bridge between the home country, their heritage culture and experiences and the host country and culture is their heritage language. A loss in proficiency in the heritage language challenges and mostly damages or destroys this bridge. However, despite the significant roles played by heritage languages, there is a limitation of sociolinguistic research in this field, including that in Australia. Likewise, Indian languages are scantily researched, despite India being one of the top source countries for migrants to Australia. To fill in this gap, a PhD study was conducted to study the linguistic skills and repertoire of Indian migrants in Sydney, Australia. One of its main aims was to analyse the language use practices of Indian migrants. The quantitative method, using surveys in the form of written questionnaires, was the main method of investigation. 176 first-generation Indian migrants participated in the survey. This paper presents the quantitative analysis of the language use practices of the first generation in the home and public domains. The focus is on language(s) used in conversations between the participants and their children, spouse and siblings. The results show that although heritage languages are largely used intra-generationally, they are on a declining trajectory in inter-generational conversations. This could raise concerns about their maintenance and transmission to subsequent generations.

Keywords: language use practice, heritage languages, Indian migrants, Indian heritage languages, home domain, language maintenance, bilingualism

1. Introduction

The 21st century has made the world a global village, with constant movement of people across different continents and countries (Prasad, 2024). This movement transports language, culture, traditions and customs to the host country. Whilst some of the immigrants are able to better maintain them, others lose them in the transition to adapting the host language, culture, practices and beliefs. The loss can be gradual, over many decades and years or it can be sudden, taking place within the initial years of the movement. Heritage languages are probably impacted the most during this process. The trend of maintenance and/or shift in these languages can be best comprehended by studying the patterns of language use of migrants.

Immigration to Australia has always been on an increasing trajectory. It was initiated by the European settlers in the 19th century, followed by a small number of Asians. The Asians were mostly Chinese and Indian migrants (Maclean, 2015; Voigt-Graf, 2005), who had soon become targets of hostile politics, especially as a result of Australia's Immigration Restriction Act in 1901 (Maclean, 2015; Voigt-Graf, 2004), which almost forbid further immigration of Asians to Australia. However, with improvements in Australia's immigration policies post mid-19th century and its growing relationship with Asian countries, particularly India, Asians, and more specifically Indians, were later able to migrate to Australia in increasing numbers. The 1996 census had recorded 77,618 Indian migrants residing in Australia (Burnley, 2001). Moving forward, their numbers had almost doubled by the 2006 census to 147,106 (ABS, 2006) and it surged to 295,362 (more than double) in the 2011 census (ABS, 2016). By then India had become the top country of migrants to Australia (Singh & Gatina, 2015). Indian migrant numbers further escalated to 721,000 in 2021 (ABS, 2021) and 846,000 in 2023 (ABS, 2023-2024). This establishes Indians' growing numbers in Australia in the past few decades.

Although the number of Indian migrants to Australia has surged in the past decades, linguistic and sociolinguistic research into their linguistic skills and repertoire is scarce. The only study conducted, to the best of the author's research, is Fernandez and Clyne's 2007 study on the linguistic skills of seven Indian and Sri Lankan families in Melbourne. To fill in this gap, a PhD study was conducted in Sydney, Australia studying the linguistic skills and repertoire of first and second-generation Indian migrants. The purpose of this paper is to present the quantitative results of language use practices of first-generation Indian migrants with their closest acquaintances in Australia. Overall, in the family context, language use practices are affiliated with the 'family members' use of a language, including parents' use of the language within and outside the family domain' (Tran et. al., 2024, p. 490). The language use practices play a key role in providing a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic environment of dual or multilingual homes (Hwang et al., 2022). They also provide a reflection of the parents' attitudes and beliefs towards their language(s): the heritage and host language in a migrant context.

1.1 Defining 'Generation' in a Migrant Context

Literature review revealed that there are many confusions and conundrums around the

definition of the term ‘generation’. Different authors use the term in diverse ways in different contexts and many do not even provide a definition or framework for its use at all. The major complexities of the definition exist in migrant contexts and Lee (2008) and Baldassar (2011) confirm the complexity. Rumbaut (2002; 2004) corroborate that the concept of ‘generation’ has not been uniformly defined worldwide, and although the impact of the absence of a clear definition may appear simplistic and straightforward, it becomes ‘complex and elusive on closer inspection’ (Rumbaut, 2004, p. 1161), particularly in the inter-generational analysis of both the short- and long-term impact of immigration. Hence, this substantiates the need for a clear definition and framework, as was required for this study as well.

In addition, it is integral to provide a clear definition of ‘generation’ in a migrant context to correctly categorise migrants into first, second and other generations, and to be able to compare their acculturation and integration processes accordingly. The definition of ‘generation’ in a genealogical context is quite simplistic and differs from that of the migrant context, for example, the second generation in a genealogy may migrate to another country as first-generation migrants. Not only this but the age at which they migrate also plays a significant role as the sociocultural and sociolinguistic experiences of migrants before and after migration would differ (Prasad, 2024) and they would have distinct impacts on their socialisation process as in the host country.

While some authors have used the terms ‘first’ and ‘second’ generation without any age categorization, others have used varied categories without providing any explanation or rationale behind it. Some of the different age categories to distinguish the two generations presented in literature are as follows. Rumbaut (2002) classified 1.0 or the first generation as all foreign-born persons who had entered the United States at 18 years or older age. Lee (2007) and Perera (2017; 2022) also classified the first generation as those having migrated at or after the age of 18. On the other hand, Min and Park (2014) used 13 years as the cut-off age, whilst Vukojevic (2019) used 12, Abad and Sheldon (2008) used 10 and Gnevshera (2020) used 5. This confirms the inconsistencies in defining and categorising migrants and/or participants of a study in the respective generational categories. Having analysed numerous studies and particularly the above, this study settled with 12 years of age at migration as the distinguishing age for generational categorisation. This is because 12 years in the home country would have significant impacts in shaping individuals’ sociolinguistic skills and sociocultural experiences, and these would affect the host country integration and/or assimilation processes accordingly. Therefore, those participants who migrated to Australia from India at or after the age of 12 were categorised as the first generation and this paper presents their language use practices in the home and public domains with their close family members in Australia.

2. Methodology

2.1 Procedure

There were three research questions that underpinned this study and can be found in Prasad (2024a). This paper focuses partly on the first question:

What are the language use patterns of first-generation Indian migrants with different interlocutors in respective situations and domains?

In order to answer the above question effectively, the study employed the mixed-methods approach, where the primary method of investigation was surveys in the form of written questionnaires. The questionnaire was translated and adapted from a wider sociolinguistic study conducted on Italian migrants in Australia by Rubino and Bettoni (2016). The primary method was followed by the qualitative method: using interviews and field observations. This paper presents results of the quantitative approach. 176 questionnaires were filled in by first-generation Indian migrants residing in different Sydney suburbs. The choice of conducting the study in Sydney was two-fold. Firstly, the 2021 census showed that approximately 208,968 migrants born in India resided in the state of New South Wales (NSW) (ABS, 2021a), being followed by the highest number residing in the state of Victoria at 258,193 (ABS, 2021b). Of the ones residing in NSW, approximately 89.88% were residing in the Greater Sydney area (ABS, 2021c). In terms of participant selection, as a random selection was not feasible in such a large cohort, convenience sampling and snowballing approaches were employed. Although these approaches are susceptible to speculation of bias, care was taken to limit distribution of questionnaires to only a few of the individual participants' acquaintances. Questionnaires were also distributed at various social, cultural and religious gatherings. Additionally, the socio-demographic factors were tested against census data on the Indian migrant population and a high degree of consistency between the two was noted. For instance, both the census data and this study showed Indian migrants mostly arriving to Australia in the past 2 decades and on a skilled-migration visa. Furthermore, convenient and snowball sampling methods are also quite common in sociolinguistic research such as Tran et al. (2024).

The Software Program for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25 was utilised for data entry, analysis and presentation. All required ethics approval was obtained from the University of Wollongong ethics committee (2016/148) prior to the commencement of any fieldwork.

2.2 Participants

There were 176 first-generation participants in this study. 48% of them were males and 52% were females, residing in various Sydney suburbs. All participants were born in India: the most common state of birth being Maharashtra and Punjab (18% each), followed by Kerala and Karnataka (11% each). These participants immigrated to Australia at 12 years of age or more. However, the majority (58%) had arrived in Australia between 21-30 years of age, followed by 30% arriving between 31-40 years of age. 72% of them had migrated to Australia on the skilled-migration visa, followed by study-migration pathway (17%).

This study confirms the notion of Indian migrants being quite young and recent migrants to Australia. At the time of the study, 76% of the first generation had been residing in Australia for less than 20 years and the rest for less than 50 years. Their age range during the study was 13 to 65 years, where the majority (38%) were between 31-40 years of age, followed closely by 37% between 41-50 years of age. 93% of the cohort were married and 99% of the married respondents were in endogamous marriage (being married to another Indian from India)

while one was married to an individual from the Indian diaspora from another country. In terms of employment, 91% of the first generation were engaged in professional occupations such as engineering, accountancy and teaching. With regard to the religious affiliation, 64% of the first generation were Hindus, followed by 14% Sikhs, 11% Christians and 9% 'others'.

3. Results and Discussion

This paper presents part of the results of the wider study conducted on the linguistic skills and repertoire of Indian migrants in Australia. It focuses on the quantitative analysis of the language use practices of first-generation Indian migrants with close family members. Participants were presented with two hypothetical situations in the home domain and one in the public domain. The first situation in the home domain was the same as that of the public domain (the third situation). This situation was always around discussion of a family matter such as buying a present for a child or a relative moving house (Table 1). The second situation was the discussion of an English television program. There were three languages presented for each situation: Hindi, English and an Indian Regional Language (IRL) and participants had to choose the most common language that they used in each situation with the respective interlocutor. This was to avoid further complexities around data entry and analysis, as three language options for each situation was already quite complex. For discussion and interpretation purposes of this paper, Hindi and Indian regional languages are mostly analysed together, and in such situations, the umbrella term 'Indian heritage languages' is used. The purpose of the three scenarios was to investigate the most common language used by the participant in different situations with the respective interlocutor.

3.1 Inter-Generational Language Use with Children

Parents' language choice plays an integral role in the maintenance and/or shift of heritage languages (Slavkov, 2017; Tran et al., 2021; Prasad, 2025). It also shows their attitude towards their heritage language and its maintenance. The results of this study revealed that more than half of the first-generation Indian migrants tend to use Indian heritage languages with their children, and this propensity is higher with the first-born as compared to the last-born. More specifically, in the home domain, 71% of the respondents reported using Indian heritage languages with the first-born to discuss a relative moving house (Table 1). However, the proportion of use of Indian heritage languages decreased to 56% with the same interlocutor in the public domain. Moreover, 52% of the first generation used Indian heritage languages to discuss an English genre in the home domain (Table 1.0). This showed a reasonable rate of use of heritage languages with the first-born and shows some heritage language exposure taking place in the home sphere.

The rate of use of heritage languages dropped in conversations with the last-born, when compared to the first-born. To converse with the youngest child in the home domain regarding a relative moving house, approximately 60% used their heritage language. It dropped to approximately 48% in conversations regarding an English genre. The propensity to use heritage languages with the last born in the public domain was also 48% (Table 1.0). Overall, around half of the first-generation respondents tend to use their heritage languages with their children while the other half prefer using English. This trend could be generalised

for the wider Indian migrant community in Australia.

On the one hand, at least half of the first generation using their heritage language to converse with their children is quite encouraging for the maintenance of Indian heritage languages. This is because Indian migrants mostly arrive in Australia on a skilled-migration visa, having met entry requirements in terms of qualifications and high proficiency levels of English. Despite that, more than half are using their heritage languages with their children in a multicultural and English dominant country. This leads to exposure of and socialisation in the Indian heritage languages to a certain extent and maintaining bilingualism skills in both generations. Furthermore, as the extended family members would mostly be back in India, the first generation would be the primary transmitters of their heritage languages to the family, particularly children. The greater the use, the better the transmission would be (Clyne, 2003; Pauwels, 2016), leading to maintenance of heritage languages. This was also prevalent in Tran et al.'s (2021) study of Vietnamese families in Australia, where the parents' greater use of Vietnamese with their children led to children's increased use. These findings also commensurate with Griva, Kiliari and Stamou's (2017) study where the Greek children reported mainly learning their heritage language from their parents. Hence, Indian parents' use of their heritage languages with their children would also play a significant role in its maintenance, as reported by Tran et al. (2024) as well, that parental language input is one of the two main channels of home language maintenance.

On the other hand, around 50% of the participants' reported use of English with their children could be of concern to the Indian migrant community. This would be because Indian migrants are overall very recent arrivals to Australia, as discussed above. Similarly, three-quarters of this study's cohort had also been living in Australia for less than 20 years. In most migrant contexts, where the linguistic wealth and resources of grandparents is usually scarce, parents are the major transmitters of the heritage language (Pauwels, 2005), and if parents do not or hardly use the heritage language, then transmission to the second and subsequent generations would be severely impacted. Similar results were also prevalent in the pilot study where about 74% of the first-generation Indian migrants were using English with the first born and 87% were using it with the youngest child (Prasad, 2025).

Active and increased use of heritage languages in a migrant context is vital for its maintenance. Pauwels (2005) believes that this is even more important than family language policy. Similarly, a study on UK Chinese, Italian and Pakistani Urdu-speaking families showed a negative repercussion on the maintenance of heritage languages as parents did not provide adequate L1 input for the development of their children's proficiency in the heritage language, despite wanting to enrich their proficiency and literacy skills in it (Gharibi & Mirvahedi, 2024). Parents need to comprehend the needs and efforts required for the maintenance of heritage languages. Active use of the heritage language needs to be practiced, and it should behold a positive attitude towards it, together with parents' understanding that mother tongue cannot be just inherited from gene (Zou, 2022). Their contribution towards increasing the additive bilingual situations is integral if they wish for their children's bilingualism to be maintained and/or heightened (Goncz, 2023). This was also apparent in Humeau et al.'s (2025) study where although 15% of the respondents' (children aged between

10 and 12) parents (at least one) used a minority language at home, the respondents did not. The consequences would be more impactful with reduced use of heritage or minority languages by parents. Together with parents' attitude, Hampton and Coretta (2024) emphasize on the pivotal role played by physical, virtual and social contexts in the facilitation of language maintenance.

Parents' reduced use of heritage languages in the home domain is sometimes a result of their fear of children's decreased academic performance (Escudero et al., 2023) but Tran et al.'s (2021) findings disproved this stigma as in their study, the Vietnamese children's high proficiency in Vietnamese had a positive correlation with their high proficiency in English. Similar findings were demonstrated by Kung's (2013) study where the second-generation Chinese migrants were able to understand the gaps in their learning of English and how to overcome them with their skills of speaking another language. In other words, their high proficiency in Chinese facilitated their acquisition of English (L2). In addition, when children's heritage and home languages are well nurtured and stimulated in a supportive home environment, then the opportunities for developing their second language in the formal education system are better (Goncz, 2023). Therefore, parents in migrant contexts need better awareness of the facilitative impact of heritage languages on the acquisition and learning of second and/or other languages. They need to be informed that multilingualism does not negatively impact language learning (Zou, 2022).

Additionally, about half the respondents of this study using English with their children could also indicate first-generation Indian migrants' adverse or decreasing attitude towards their heritage language. Parent's positive attitude towards their heritage language is integral for its maintenance and a change in their attitude could lead to unfavorable impacts on the heritage language (Clyne, 2005; Li, 2006; Willoughby, 2018). A positive attitude leading to maintenance of heritage languages would also foster the maintenance of ethnic culture and identity in a migrant context, which are easily lost in their transition period to adapting to the host culture.

Conversely, parents' increased use of the host language with the younger or youngest child is also a common phenomenon. This could be because the younger child(ren) tend to use the host language quite significantly, compared to the older one(s). Parents tend to use a higher level of heritage language with the older child while they are growing up, but the older siblings tend to introduce the host language to the younger ones upon embarking on their formal education. This leads to an overall increase in the use of the host language in the home domain. This phenomenon was also prevalent in Fernandez and Clyne's (2007) study. The first-born's formal education has flow-on effects on the younger children's proficiency in host and heritage languages accordingly (Clyne, 1982, 1991; Fernandez & Clyne, 2007; Willoughby, 2018; Prasad, 2024). Although it nourishes bilingualism, the cost factor at most times is the heritage language.

3.2 Intra-Generational Language Use with the Spouse

Together with inter-generational use of language, intra-generational language use practices also play a significant role in the maintenance and/or attrition of heritage languages. This

paper presents first-generation Indian migrants' intra-generational use of languages with their spouse and siblings. This is particularly significant in the home domain as this is where the primary conversations take place. Additionally, the language socialisation also demonstrates the language exposure to the others, particularly children. The language used with the spouse – that is, between parents - also determines the language ideologies of the interlocutor, although studies on the language use practices between parents (of spouses) is quite scarce generally (Slavkov, 2017), and the Indian migrant community is no exception.

The results of this study showed that 93% of the participants were married and this cohort used an overall high rate of heritage languages with their spouse. More specifically, in the home domain, while 94% of the respondents used an Indian heritage language (56% Indian regional language and 38% Hindi) to discuss a personal matter with their spouse, 80% used it to discuss an English genre. This proportion dropped to 77% using an Indian heritage language (48% an Indian regional language and 29% Hindi) in the same situation in the public domain. The trend of high rate of heritage language use between spouses in the Indian migrant community is noteworthy as it reflects the first generation's language ideologies. It could also indicate the rich heritage language ecology that they build at home for their family and the exposure they provide to children. This is again despite most first-generation participants of the study being highly educated and very proficient in English. Parents' interaction among themselves via their heritage language would be a source of encouragement to the children. Greater exposure of the heritage language would result in more active use in children, resulting in its transmission and maintenance (De Hower, 2007; Willoughby, 2018; Humeau et al., 2025a; Prasad, 2025). In case the children are not active language users, parents' use, and modelling would at least improve their receptive skills. Not only that but when parents valorise and support the use of the community or heritage language at home, that contributes to children's well-being as well; it also enhances family cohesion and children's overall life satisfaction (Humeau et al., 2025). Tran et al., (2021) also confirm that parents' language practices reflect their language ideologies and management efforts.

Nevertheless, the approximately 20% of the respondents' use of English with their spouse in the public domain and to discuss an English genre at home needs to be brought to light. This is mostly because almost all the married respondents were in endogamous marriage, - which would indicate spouses sharing the same linguistic skills and repertoire - and about one-fifth of them using English to converse with each other, could be quite a significant indicator of the potential movement towards language shift in the Indian migrant community. This is because endogamous marriage is normally regarded a stronger agent of language maintenance than exogamous marriage (Clyne, 1991, 2003; Clyne & Kipp, 1995, 1997; Pauwels, 2005; Rubino, 2007). The trend of use of English between spouses would also be of concern due to Indian migrants being quite recent arrivals to Australia, having arrived mostly post 2000, as noted above. The more recent arrival of migrants should warrant more rapid use and stronger maintenance of heritage languages. These concerns were also shared by Humeau et al.'s (2025) findings, except that their results signaled the use of the minority language by 'both' parents, as opposed to one only, to foster the maintenance of heritage language in

children. Parents' use of the language also reflects their attitude towards it and this attitude could have concomitant impact on their children's attitude towards their heritage language, particularly its use in the public domain. Children need to associate positive attitude and values with their heritage language in order to learn it and contribute towards its maintenance (Humeau et al., 2025a).

3.3 Intra-Generational Language Use with Siblings

Together with the spouse, the first generation's language use practices with their siblings also play an important role in the indication of whether the heritage language is on the trajectory of maintenance or shift. The siblings' socialisation process in a migrant context could be quite similar where they may have had analogous socialisation process in their initial years in the home country and then migrated to the host country. During the study, approximately 48% of the first generation had their eldest sibling living in Australia and 40% had the youngest one. It is opportune to reiterate that the cut-off age for dividing the participants in the first and second generation respectively was 12 years. This was at the time of entry to Australia.

The results of the study show that an average of approximately 80% of the respondents claimed to use Indian heritage languages in conversations with their eldest sibling, in all the three situations and in both the home and public domains (Table 1.0). The use of Indian regional languages was slightly higher than the use of Hindi, but these results show quite promising use of Indian heritage languages amongst first-generation siblings in the Indian migrant community in Sydney, Australia. The results for respondents' conversations with the youngest sibling is quite similar with an average of 75% of them using an Indian heritage language in the home domain, but of concern would be the drop to 60% in the public domain. This is similar to the results of language use with the spouse and could indicate that first-generation Indian migrants could be slightly more confident and comfortable using their heritage languages in the home than public domain. This shift in attitude could be impactful for the maintenance of heritage languages.

Nevertheless, the overall high rate of use of Indian heritage languages amongst first-generation siblings could play a significant role in the facilitation of its maintenance. As most of the siblings' socialisation and education processes would have taken place in India, they would have mostly communicated in their heritage language while there. It is encouraging to note that they are maintaining that trend to a large extent in Australia. The use of heritage languages amongst siblings is a strong indicator and agent of active multilingualism (Prasad, 2024a). This concept was also demonstrated by Slavkov's (2017) Canadian study of bilingualism and multilingualism. This trend of language use would also solidify siblings' bond with each other as overall, intra-generational use of heritage language usually promotes social group membership (Crystal, 2010). Rubino's (2019) sociolinguistic study on third-generation Italo-Australians had also shown that the respondents resorted to the use of Italian while speaking with the siblings and peers, in part for sharing jokes and other expressive language functions. Therefore, first-generation siblings seem to be quite significant agents of language maintenance overall, and in the Indian migrant community in particular. This trend of language use by the first generation would largely be providing

encouragement and motivation for heritage language use in the younger generation.

Table 1. Language use practices of first-generation Indian migrants

	Hindi	English	IRL
Children (first born/only child) (N=157)			
At home: relative moved home	28	29	43
At home: English television program	21	48	31
In public: relative moved house	23	44	33
(Last born) (N=144)			
At home: relative moved home	24	41	35
At home: English television program	21	52	27
In public: relative moved house	19	53	28
Spouse (N=164)			
At home: present for children/relative	38	6	56
At home: English television program	33	19	48
In public: present for children/relative	29	23	48
Siblings			
(Eldest sibling) (N=84)			
At home: relative got married	38	16	46
At home: English TV program	37	23	40
In public: relative got married	34	28	38
(Youngest sibling) (N=70)			
At home: relative got married	36	23	41
At home: English TV program	37	26	37
In public: relative got married	26	40	34

**Figures are in percentages and have been rounded off.*

**IRL: Indian Regional Language*

4. Conclusion

This paper presented the quantitative analysis of the patterns of language use in the Indian migrant community in Sydney, Australia. It encapsulated both inter- and intra-generational language use practices of the first generation in the home and public domains, particularly with their children, spouse and siblings. The first generation were classified as those individuals who had migrated from India to Australia at or after 12 years of age. The findings presented in this paper are of the larger study conducted on language maintenance and bilingualism in the Indian migrant community in Sydney, Australia. Future publications would present the language use practices of the second generation, as well as results of qualitative data collection.

The results of the study revealed that although Indian migrants are quite recent arrivals to

Australia, their propensity of use of heritage languages is not at the optimum level. This is particularly demonstrated in their inter-generational conversations with the second generation. The proclivity of use of heritage languages was lower with the youngest child, ranging between 48-60% while it was slightly higher with the eldest child, ranging between 52-71% in the three given situations in both the home and public domains. As the first generation mostly migrate to Australia on a skilled migration visa (72% of this cohort) and study-migration pathway (17%), they would be raising nuclear families and so, mostly be the transmitters of the heritage language to the second and subsequent generations. Hence, if 50% of them are using English to converse with their children within the first twenty years of their residency in Australia, the maintenance and transmission of Indian heritage languages would be of concern to the Indian migrant community and other stakeholders. These results indicate the decline in both maintenance and transmission rates, unless the first generation became more proactive users of their heritage languages.

The first-generation Indian migrants' intra-generational patterns of language use, on the other hand, was more skewed towards Indian heritage languages. Use of heritage languages with their spouse ranged from 77% in the public domain to 94% in the home domain. Similarly, it was approximately 80% with the eldest sibling and an average of 68% with the youngest sibling. This signals quite a high rate of transmission to the second generation, particularly in the home domain. The first generation would be the models of use and show appreciation and acceptance of their heritage language to the younger generations, instilling similar values and attitudes in them. Their continued use of the heritage language would encourage and motivate the younger generation to become at least passive users, if not active.

5. Recommendations

The home domain and parents provide the heritage language ecology to the second and future generations of migrants and if heritage languages are not nourished and cherished in these domains, then their transmission and maintenance are significantly impacted. The first generation will need to be active users of the heritage language, not only intra-generationally but inter-generationally as well. A decreased rate of use of the heritage language in the home domain could also signal the first generation's negative or declining attitude towards the language and, this would lead to concomitant impacts on the second and subsequent generations. The first generation will have to demonstrate pride and a positive attitude towards and appreciation of it. They will have to embrace it and become role models.

The first-generation will also need to encourage use of heritage languages in the younger generation, and if need be, subsequently implement family language policies to increase its use, particularly in the home domain, which is paramount for maintenance of heritage languages. Together with the first generation being proactive users, support can also be obtained from extended stakeholders such as the educational, religious and socio-cultural organisations. Additionally, in order to maintain heritage languages in multilingual and multicultural countries such as Australia, more supportive policies will need to be implemented. These will provide better provisions for use and study of minority and heritage languages. Currently, minority languages are mostly studied as part of community language

schools (after school) in Australia but if they were integrated in the mainstream education at a higher rate, their maintenance would be enhanced, as migrants would feel prouder of their heritage language.

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