



# Language mindsets and negative emotions in multilingual families

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## Introduction Theoretical Framework

Bilinguals' experiences with family language policy (FLP), family communication and relations, their language mindsets and emotions about bi/multilingualism

**Psychology of Language Learning (PLL):** language mindsets, negative and positive emotions, positive psychology

**Family Language Policy (FLP):** (Tannenbaum 2012; De Houwer 2022)

### 1. Mindsets

#### Macro (societal) level

Aggressive monolingualism, monolingual ideal, standard language ideologies

The myth of monolingualism as the norm (e.g., Clyne 2005; Blommaert 2011)

#### Meso and micro level

Monolingual mindsets

Beliefs about multilingualism and multilingual repertoire (cf. Grosjean 2008; Ortega 2010; Piller & Gerber 2018)

#### Individual level (PLL/classrooms)

Fixed language mindset

Growth language mindset

Beliefs about language ability (e.g., Mercer & Ryan 2020; Noels & Lou 2015)

### 2. Negative emotions in immigrant contexts

#### Questionnaires

- Three generations of the Turkish immigrant community in the Netherlands (n=116)
- Language and social backgrounds
- Language use and choice, attitudes, social interactions
- Identity and emotions
- Language anxiety

#### Elicitation Physiological Experiment

- 11 families (n=30)
- Video-retelling experiment
- Biopac system (Galvanic skin response, electrodermal activity)

#### Interviews

- 11 families (n=30)
- Language use,
- Identity and emotions, attitudes, experiences
- Reasons for language anxiety
- Effects of language anxiety...

The present study is part of a larger project that investigated **social, emotional and physiological aspects** of language anxiety across three generations of the Turkish immigrant community in the Netherlands (Sevinç 2016; Sevinç & Dewaele 2016; Sevinç 2017, Sevinç & Backus 2018; Sevinç 2020; Sevinç 2022).

- **Heritage Language anxiety (HLA)**
- **Majority Language Anxiety (MLA)**

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## Methodological Framework

The data is part of a larger project “Language Anxiety in an Immigrant Context: An Interdisciplinary Perspective” (Sevinç 2017)

Semi-structured interviews with two Turkish families **with the highest levels of language anxiety**: two mothers and four daughters

	F1M	F1C1	F1C2
Age	43	23	14
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Country of birth	Turkey	Netherlands	Netherlands
Anxiety type	MLA	MLA/HLA	HLA

F1M: Mother of Family 1, F1C1: eldest daughter, F1C2: youngest daughter

	F2M	F2C1	F2C2
Age	47	26	26
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Country of birth	Turkey	Turkey	Turkey
Anxiety type	MLA	MLA/HLA	MLA/HLA

F2M: Mother of Family 2, F2C1: twin daughter 1, F2C2: twin daughter 2

## Results

### FIXED-MONOLINGUAL MINDSETS NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

- The **transmission of anxiety** across generations becomes prevalent in multilingual, transcultural families when certain mindsets are formed
    - at the individual level (i.e., **fixed-monolingual mindset**)
    - the social and organizational level
      - **aggressive monolingualism**
      - **family language pressure**
  - Families built their parenting mainly on a scaffold made of fixed-monolingual mindsets, anger, regret, social-fear learning, stress, blame, restrictions, and fear-based anxiety
  - Anxiety about monolingual norms and aggressive monolingualism spreads from one generation to the next
    - **intergenerational tension**
    - **sociolinguistic and emotional pressure**
- Social fear learning
  - Anxiety transmission
  - Grandparents' negative role
  - Avoidance
  - Breakdown in family bonds and communication
  - Family decision on abandoning the heritage language (Turkish)

## Conclusion

- FLP, when it is built on monolingual mindsets, pressure and anxiety, has not only linguistic but also **social and psychological costs for individuals, families, and society**.
- Interdisciplinarity: For a better understanding of multilingualism, a focus on **sociology or sociolinguistics** is beneficial, YET
- We also need a special attention on **psychology of language learning** (e.g., mindsets, anxiety) for a better investigation of minority experiences both in and outside the family.
- How to help multilingual children or parents develop **a growth multilingual mindset**
- Whether and how **positive psychology practices** work **in FLP**