Paper Title: Family language policy in mixed marriages- who is in control? A case study of families on intercultural marriages in Perth

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Abstract
From the interview of Japanese women migrants in Perth in intermarried relationships with partners whose first language is not Japanese, this study explores the language use in the day-to-day domestic environment. The project employs the concept of the family language policy and examines what the families’ language policies are, what factors contribute to their policies, and how and why they adhere to or change the policies. Families do not usually state their language policies explicitly, but whether intentionally or unintentionally, people make decisions on their language use in each speech community and those decisions become the community’s language policies. Spolsky (2007) says that there are three components in language policy whether it is national policy or family policy: practices, beliefs, and management. Our study focuses on the sphere of the family and attempts an ethnographic investigation into the language use in the domestic relationships through exploring the three domains Spolsky identifies. These three domains do not operate separately but are intertwined and shape each other.

The study identifies key factors that influence the family language policy. For many women, the strongest internal factor within the family is the belief on ‘elite bilingualism’ that one should speak two languages perfectly as a native speaker to be a bilingual (Heller, 2007). This belief can both encourage and discourage the bilingualism (or multilingualism) within the family. The
The strongest external influence on the family language policy is the status of English, that is, its dominance in the society and its social and economic mobility. Yet, the family language policy also shows fluidity and variations, and they are related to individuals’ migrant identities. The study discusses how their migrant identities shape their beliefs, practices and management of the family language policy, and how the language use influences their identities at the same time.
