

PARENTAL EXPERIENCES WITH CHILDREN'S HERITAGE LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND LOSS:
CASES OF ELEVEN CZECH AND SLOVAK TRANSNATIONAL IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN THE
SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES.

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ABSTRACT

Marta McCabe: Parental experiences with children's heritage language maintenance and loss: Cases of eleven Czech and Slovak transnational immigrant families in the southeastern United States.
(Under the direction of Xue Lan Rong)

This qualitative study explored experiences of immigrant parents from the Czech Republic and Slovakia with heritage language (HL) learning and use among their children in the southeastern United States. Central European immigrants not only constitute an understudied population, they are highly unlikely to maintain the HL across generations given their relatively small numbers, geographical dispersal, higher rate of intermarriages, and the general absence of formal heritage language programs.

Drawing on in-depth interviews and informal conversations with parents in eleven families in which one (n=5) or both (n=6) parents immigrated from the Czech Republic or Slovakia, this study presents an account of the parents' language goals, their home language practices, and the perceived challenges and opportunities in HL maintenance. The framework of transnational migration theories (Brittain, 2002; 2009) guided the analysis, exploring the potential of transnational practices to overcome the dominant society's strong pressures for language assimilation.

Findings suggest that: (1) Parents highly valued the HL but generally did not see its future practical use for their children. (2) Parental effort at HL maintenance ranged from strong resolve to ambivalence. (3) Parents in mixed-marriage families experienced HL maintenance as a struggle from the start, while parents in all-immigrant families faced a dilemma of how much English to introduce. (4) English and the HL were often perceived as interfering with one another. (5) Parents felt isolated in their effort to promote and teach the HL. (6) All parents observed an intergenerational shift in the

relationship to the heritage culture and a gap between their original goals and the children's current HL proficiency. The children's identity choices and their less-than-expected HL fluency triggered grief in many parents.

The conditions contributing to HL retention came overwhelmingly from the transnational realm while factors interrupting HL maintenance came largely from the dominant society, supporting the argument that transnational involvement of immigrants affects HL retention positively. Regular and lengthy transnational trips overseas emerged as a crucial strategy for successful HL maintenance. In addition, approaching the HL as a practical resource facilitated HL learning and retention. Implications for public schools, language experts, and immigrant parents are discussed.

To Matouš, Damián, and Bea

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation describes experiences of Czech and Slovak immigrant parents in 11 families with heritage language (hereafter referred to as HL) retention and attrition of their children in the southeastern part of the United States. The study illustrates the challenges and dilemmas immigrant parents face when attempting to raise bilingual children in the United States in light of the current English-only policies and the largely monocultural education practice. Specifically, this study explores the ways in which transnational (Brittain, 2002; 2009) involvement and practices of the parents might counter the dominant society's strong pressures for language assimilation.

The focus of this study is on central European immigrants, who constitute an understudied population in educational research. Experiences of Czechs and Slovaks might offer insights about the situation of many other language groups from central, eastern, and southeastern Europe (such as Polish, Bulgarian, Slovenian, Serbian, and Bosnian). Many of these language minorities are highly unlikely to maintain their HL successfully across generations because of their relatively small numbers, geographical dispersal, higher rate of intermarriages, and the general absence of suitable language programs for children. In presenting experiences of understudied immigrant populations, this dissertation informs language education policy and programs in the United States.

Context of the Research Problem

English language acquisition among immigrants and their children has always been the focus of research on language and migration. However, it has been documented that, for most immigrants, learning English involves losing the HL (Fillmore, 1991; García, 2009). While immigrants in the United

States today are learning English rather quickly (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Tse, 2001a; 2001b), they tend to leave their HL behind. This rapid shift from the HL to English, or subtractive bilingualism, has repercussions for the immigrant children, families, and communities (Fillmore, 2000; Fishman, 1991), such as a creation of a language barrier between parents and children, weakening of parental authority, and growing intergenerational alienation and conflict (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005).

On the other hand, bilingualism is proved to have multiple cognitive, social, and economic benefits for individuals and the whole society (Cummins, 2005). In fact, Cummins (2005) and García (2009) argued that the current practice of educating children in a monolingual setting is no longer appropriate in the 21st century. These scholars claimed that all children should have access to the learning of other languages. Unlike in the United States, the benefits of bilingualism are widely accepted and incorporated into education policies and practice elsewhere in the world. Tucker (2008), for example, pointed out that every European country has developed a national policy to introduce at least one foreign language into every child's elementary school curriculum. This is, however, far from the reality in the United States, a country that prides itself on being the most multicultural in the world.

Education policies and practices in the United States have paid little attention to the issue of HL loss and the potential bilingualism of children of immigrants, focusing exclusively on the goal of English language acquisition. In fact, this linguistic asset of immigrant-origin children is, ironically, often treated as a deficiency (Valenzuela, 2005), a condition potentially interfering with the children's acquisition of English and their overall academic achievement, or even as a threat to national unity (Crawford, 2008). It has been documented (Cummins, 1986/2001; Gibson 1988; 1995; Valenzuela, 1999) that the monolingual and monocultural schooling in the United States subtracts resources, such as language, from immigrant youth, and that it continues to treat the children's unique talents and experiences as deficits rather than advantages. In such an environment, children of immigrants quickly lose proficiency

in their parents' languages upon entering the public education system, and they grow up to become mostly monolingual English-speaking adults. Whereas knowledge of the English language is almost universal among children of immigrants, only a small percentage of second-generation immigrants are able to converse in their parents' language, much less read and write in the HL (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Considering that children of immigrants represent one fifth of the total number of school-age children in the United States today, and that this number is expected to grow (Rong & Preissle, 2009), a huge linguistic potential is being ignored and wasted by schools' sole focus on English language acquisition and proficiency (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

The most important factors affecting HL retention or loss among second-generation immigrants include language policies and schooling practices of the receiving country, existence of an ethnic community with language resources and supports, an opportunity to attend a bilingual school or an ethnic community language school (e.g., Chinese language school, Korean language school, and so on), and the use of the HL at home (Lee & Suarez, 2009; Nesteruk, 2010). As a result of these factors, apparent differences exist between distinct language minorities. It has been documented, for example, that children from Spanish-speaking backgrounds are four times more likely to retain their HL than children from any other background (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The higher rate of HL retention in this language group is attributed mainly to the existence of larger communities, the use of Spanish in public realms, and the existence of bilingual education programs. Children who have the opportunity to use their native language beyond the context of the family, such as in their schools and communities, are generally more likely to retain the HL and become bilingual.

However, many immigrants today do not live within a large ethnic community, many families cannot afford private schools because of economic reasons, and many parents are simply unable to find suitable programs for the HL they hope to maintain. This dissertation explores HL use, maintenance, and

loss with two particular immigrant populations facing these challenges. Because of their geographical dispersal, Czech and Slovak immigrants in the southeastern United States today can typically rely neither on the resources of a large ethnic community nor on any institutional support in terms of HL maintenance (Kouritzin, 1999; Robila, 2010). Moreover, European-origin immigrants in the United States are more likely than other immigrant groups to marry outside their ethnic and linguistic heritage. The fact that a large percentage of European-origin immigrants marry English-speaking U.S. citizens further reduces the chances of HL retention among their children (Jensen, 2001).

At the same time, language is closely linked to one's heritage and ethnicity and can be used to claim or distance oneself from a particular identity (Bailey, 2000). The persistent racial discrimination against non-White and non-English speaking people has the potential to erode HL even in larger Spanish communities. Unlike most current research, this study focused on White immigrants and explored the intersection of language, ethnicity, and race from the viewpoint of central European immigrant parents.

Research Questions

Two overarching research questions are addressed in this dissertation: 1) What are the experiences of Czech and Slovak immigrants in the United States with retention and attrition of the heritage language among their children? and 2) As perceived by parents, what socialization practices and larger societal conditions contribute to or interrupt their children's heritage language maintenance? "Experiences" include parental goals and expectations for their children, perceived successes and challenges, and any other perceptions and impressions related to HL use, retention, and loss among their children. The "conditions" include both within-family practices and motivations, such as language use at home or parental determination, as well as larger social factors, such as peer relationships, schooling experiences of the children, or the perceived status of the HL.

A number of more specific questions guided the research process: How do parents approach the HL philosophically and strategically? According to parents, what is the role and purpose of the HL for their children? What goals do parents have for their children in terms of HL proficiency and use? What strategies for HL maintenance do parents use? Which HL maintenance practices work best and what are the main challenges? How is the HL used in the immigrants' homes? How are decisions regarding HL use made? Are the choices for language practice made voluntarily or involuntarily? How do other contexts, including the hegemonic social, cultural, political, and ideological forces, influence parental approach and children's HL maintenance? How does transnational involvement of the families affect HL maintenance?

Methodology and Theoretical Frame

This research employs an interpretive philosophical perspective (Bochner, 2005), focusing on the meaning making in the stories of the participants. It prioritizes the parents' own understanding of their experiences. As a researcher, I do not seek to discover an objective "truth" but rather to understand how parents make sense of their specific situation. The parents' interpretation constitutes a reality they act upon and is crucial to understanding their HL choices, goals, and practices.

Qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviewing, informal conversations, and observation, were used in order to better understand the experiences of Czech and Slovak parents and their spouses with HL use, maintenance, and loss. The use of open-ended questions allowed to follow participants' leads and thus to prioritize their voices over that of the researcher. Through a combination of purposeful sampling methods and snowball sampling (Creswell, 2008) 11 families with children between ages 4 and 17 were reached. In each family, one or both parents were interviewed in depth.

Although HL loss is typically explained by the pressures for linguistic assimilation of the receiving society and by the differential power between languages, the life realities of today's immigrants are often shaped by multiple other contexts. The experiences of current-day immigrants range from sojourners and temporary workers to transmigrants, and their motivations are guided not only by the context of the receiving society. Transnational migration theories (Brittain, 2002; 2009; Schiller, Bash, & Blanc, 1995) suggest that today's immigrants cross boundaries often, continue to be actively involved in their homeland, and continue to draw on the resources from their country of origin. Additionally, they may organize their lives with respect to the rapidly changing world as a whole instead of just a single country or two. Today's migrants might see themselves as global citizens and make choices accordingly.

The framework of transnational migration theories (Brittain, 2002) guided the analysis of parental experiences with HL maintenance into the 2nd generation, focusing on their goals, motivations, and HL practices as influenced by the dominant context, the heritage context, and a global context. Specifically, this study examines the potential of transnational practices of immigrant families to overcome the strong pressures of the dominant society for language assimilation.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the research on language and immigration in several distinct ways. Firstly, situated within the framework of transnational migration theories, it calls attention to HL learning and loss instead of focusing on English language acquisition (Bartlett & García, 2011). Although it has been documented that the acquisition of a second language for immigrants in the United States is often accompanied by the loss of their first language (Fillmore, 1991; 2000; Kouritzin, 1999), the major focus within the domain of language education and migration is still being placed on the children's mastering of English and HL loss is neglected in both research and practice. Only lately has some

attention been paid to HL maintenance and to the prospect of bilingualism among children of immigrants, at least within the walls of academia (Cummins, 2005; Suarez, 2002; Valdés, 2001; 2005).

Still, these scholars have focused primarily on large language groups from Latin America and Asia.

Secondly, this study explores HL use of Czech and Slovak immigrants, two understudied groups from central Europe. These less visible language minorities may be expected to face numerous challenges in their HL maintenance efforts. Often lacking the resources of ethnic communities, they experience no language support from schools. Moreover, European-origin immigrants are more likely than others to marry outside their ethnic and linguistic group, which further lowers their likelihood of raising bilingual children (Jensen, 2001). In families where only one parent speaks the HL, the home exposure to that language is significantly lower than in families where both parents are foreign born.

Thirdly, this study examines the processes of HL retention and loss in more detail by focusing on families with children in elementary school. Recent research (Fillmore, 1991; Nesteruk, 2010) has suggested that a major drop in the children's use of the HL happens around age 5 or 6, just as they enter kindergarten. However, only a few studies have attempted to examine and explain the process of language shift and loss in greater detail (Kouritzin, 1999). Available research offers little insight into the circumstances of language loss and explains the language transition simply as being a result of children's greater exposure to English (Nesteruk, 2010). As Fillmore (2000) noted, the more specific questions, such as "How and why do children give up and lose their primary languages as they learn English? [and] What is involved, and what role are the schools playing in the process?" (p. 207), remain unanswered. This dissertation explores the particularities of HL loss by focusing on families with elementary-schools children and by studying parental perceptions of the relationship between HL maintenance and public schooling, with its emphasis on monolingual excellence (García, 2009).

Fourthly, this study sheds more light on the role of immigrant parents in the process of HL maintenance. Although it has been documented that children of immigrants typically come to prefer English to the HL in their everyday lives (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), we know much less about the role parents might play in the language shift. In contrast to the commonly held view that immigrant parents strive to devote as much time and resources as possible to the maintenance of the HL in their children, my exploratory study (McCabe, 2011), supported also by the findings of Tse (2001b) and Nesteruk (2010), indicated that parental values and actions may not be as clear-cut as expected. To help their children excel academically in a monolingual schooling system, some parents may choose to assist their children primarily with English, as required by schools, which leaves them with less time and energy for any HL maintenance efforts. Some parents might, in fact, contribute to HL loss through the choices they make for their children based on their understanding of the larger social context in which they happen to live. This dissertation examines parents' values, goals, desires, efforts, and ambitions regarding HL maintenance in order to better understand parental role in the language shift of the second generation.

Fifthly, this study recognizes the new and multiple experiences of migrant populations today. Whereas in the past immigrants were thought to break their ties with the homeland, to settle permanently in the new country, perhaps to live within an ethnic community, and eventually assimilate linguistically and culturally, the realities of today's immigrants differ significantly from this pattern. Today, migrants may be staying only temporarily (sojourner), they might travel back "home" regularly and maintain ties with their homeland (transmigrant), or they might move between several countries during their lifetimes. Utilizing transnational migration theories frameworks (Brittain, 2002; 2009), this dissertation explores the role of the dominant, heritage, and global contexts as they relate to the parents' HL goals and practices. This study examines the potential of transnational and global contexts to overcome the strong pressure for language assimilation in the United States.

Finally, one of the major contributions of this study is its focus on family composition and the language practices of mixed-marriage families, which has not yet been explored in depth in educational literature on language and migration (Lam, 2011; Shin 2010). This dissertation included ethnically and linguistically intact families as well as families where only one parent was foreign born, allowing for comparisons between the two groups.

Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 of this dissertation reviews relevant literature on HL maintenance and loss among children of immigrants, focusing specifically on the needs and challenges experienced by central and Eastern European immigrants. Theoretical frame is presented in the second half of Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology in more detail, explaining the sampling procedures and methods of data collection and analysis, noting researcher's positionality, and introducing the participant families.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 present the findings of this study. Chapter 4 discusses parental goals and motivations with regard to HL maintenance; Chapter 5 provides an account of parental efforts to provide sufficient HL exposure to their children; Chapter 6 focuses on the children's HL use as perceived by the parents; and Chapter 7 answers the main research questions, summarizing the differences and similarities across families. Finally, Chapter 8 provides a discussion of the findings, noting the theoretical and practical implications of the study and suggesting directions for future research.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are used throughout the text and are defined as outlined below. These terms are not alphabetically listed. Instead, they were clustered into content related categories. More detailed discussion is provided within the text of the dissertation.

- *Bilingualism* – an ability to use more than one language (Baker, 2011; García, 2009).

- *Balanced (true) bilingual* – an individual with a native-like control over two or more languages across domains; an ideal state that is very rarely achieved. Most bilinguals are dominant in one language or develop different levels of proficiency in different domains or situations (Baker, 2011).
- *Emerging (incipient) bilingual* – an individual to some degree dominant in one language (Baker, 2011; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).
- *Additive Bilingualism* – a situation when learning a second language does not interfere with the learning of the first language and ultimately both languages are developed (Baker, 2011).
- *Subtractive Bilingualism* – a situation when learning of a second language interferes with the learning of the first language, eventually leading to the loss of the first language (Baker, 2011).
- *Heritage language* - a language other than English spoken in immigrant homes by parents and/or children (Valdés, 2005).
- *1.5 generation immigrant* – a foreign-born individual who arrived in the United States at a young age, generally before age 10 (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999).
- *Second-generation immigrant* – an individual born in the United States to foreign-born parents (Rong & Preissle, 2009).
- *2.5 generation immigrant* – an individual born in the United States in a family where one parent is foreign born and the other is U.S. born (Rumbaut, 2009).
- *American Transnational* – a person born in the United States to at least one foreign-born parent, a person with cosmopolitan social and cultural capital (Cervantes-Soon, 2014).
- *Mixed marriage or intermarriage* – a marriage in which the two parents come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. An example would be a marriage where one parent is U.S.-born English-speaking and one is foreign-born, Czech- or Slovak-speaking.
- *Central Europe* – Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary.

- *Eastern Europe* – all the countries once a part of the Eastern bloc (such as Bulgaria, Belarus, Ukraine, and so on), including the central European countries (in other sources, “eastern Europe” may be defined as not including the central European countries).
- *Subtractive assimilation* – a process of immigrant adaptation to a new country in which heritage cultures and languages are being devalued and rapidly replaced by the majority culture and language (Gibson, 1995). Schools play an important role in this process of subtracting students’ culture and language from immigrant youth (Valenzuela, 2005).
- *Additive acculturation* – a process of immigrant adaptation to a new country in which heritage cultures and languages are valued. The new culture and language are added to the children’s home culture and language to expand their repertoire of cultural and linguistic skills (Gibson, 1995). Additive schooling would build on the skills children bring with them from home to the classroom.
- *Linguistic capital* – linguistic competency valued in a specific situation or context (Bourdieu, 1977).
- *Transnational social space* - a human collectivity that includes people in different localities and the ties in between them. The ties are instrumental in nature and can be both formal, such as a membership in a political party, and informal, such as family ties (Brittain, 2002).

List of Abbreviations

CZ	Czech
SK	Slovak
ESL	English as a Second Language
HL	Heritage language
HLs	Heritage languages

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Frame

Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of literature related to HL maintenance and loss among children of immigrants in the United States. First, the definition of HL learners is outlined and the benefits of HL retention are described. Second, the process of HL loss is documented as it happens over generations of immigrants as well as within the lifespan of individuals. Third, conditions contributing to HL retention are examined, including the presence of an ethnic community, HL use within immigrant families, the prestige of the HL, and a sense of ethnic and racial identity. It is suggested that smaller language minorities, such as Czechs or Slovaks, may face numerous challenges in HL maintenance efforts. At the same time, the role of ethnicity and race in HL use is discussed. Finally, an overview of the immigration history and language practices of Czech and Slovak immigrants in the United States is presented.

Heritage Language Learners in the United States

The debate about the definition of “HL learners” is far from settled. The two most commonly used definitions are based on the work of Valdés (2001; 2005) and Fishman (2001). Valdés proposed a linguistics-based understanding and defined an HL learner in the United States as “a student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken . . . and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the HL” (Valdés, cited in Sweley, 2006, p. 21). Heritage speakers typically acquire the home language before learning the country’s dominant language, English. However, further learning and use of the HL slows down when the child begins to speak English. Although HL learners are generally comfortable using English, the mastery of the HL varies widely, and it is often limited to interactions

within the home and among friends. In fact, HL speakers often lack vocabulary in more specialized domains, such as work or politics (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007). Valdés' definition assumes that the child is familiar with the HL to some degree, but he or she generally lacks complete acquisition of the language because of the absence of formal schooling in the HL. Some HL speakers might decide to explicitly study the HL later in life, perhaps in college. However, because of their previous exposure to the spoken language, they require a pedagogical approach different from a typical foreign language instruction (Kagan, 2005; Randolph, 2011; Valdés, 2005). Language programs specifically aimed at HL learners are still lacking in the United States, even for larger language groups, such as Spanish speakers.

A broader definition, identifying heritage learners by their cultural and ancestral identification with a given language, was proposed by Fishman (1991; 2001). This second definition does not assume any direct familiarity with the language. An example of an HL learner in Fishman's view is a fourth-generation Italian immigrant who is monolingual in English or an English-speaking descendant of a Native American tribe. Foreign language instruction is appropriate for HL learners as defined by Fishman. In this text, Valdés' definition of an HL is used it assumes a degree of familiarity with and use of the HL. In this study, at least one parent in each participant family was fluent in Czech or Slovak. Therefore, children in all participant families had the potential to become familiar with some aspects of the language, to be to some degree bilingual in English and the HL.

Definitions of bilingualism. Numerous definitions of bilingualism exist in the literature and vary across research studies and whole disciplines. Some scholars define a bilingual speaker as a person with native-like control of both languages while others require only a minimal competence in the second language for a person to be considered a bilingual speaker (Baker, 2011). Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova (2010), for example, defined bilingualism as at least a minimal level of proficiency in two languages. Portes and Rumbaut (2001), however, defined a bilingual person as someone able to speak,

read, and write fluently or almost fluently in both languages. A bilingual competence may be perhaps better understood as a continuum of proficiencies in the two languages. Valdés (2001) developed a diagram (Figure 1) to demonstrate this more fluid understanding of bilingualism. The end points represent a monolingual proficiency and the middle part displays the various types of bilingualism.

Figure 1. A continuum of bilingual proficiency

A	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	AB	BA	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	Ba	B
monolingual in language A	a range of bilingual proficiency												monolingual in language B

Note: The first letter stands for the stronger language, and font sizes and case suggest different proficiencies. All the combinations represent particular types of bilingualism.

Source: Valdés (2001, p. 4)

One type of bilingual proficiency is not, however, included in the diagram above. “Limited bilinguals” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 273), also called “semilinguals” (García, 2009, p. 56) are people who do not acquire fluency in either language. With the prevalent English-only policies in education today, certain groups of immigrant youth are in great danger of abandoning their HL and at the same time not learning English well. This concern applies typically to immigrants who come to the United States later than in early childhood but before adulthood because they do not receive a full education in their home country and at the same time they may not become fluent speakers of English. On one hand, this definition has been critiqued as a deficit perspective because it portrays these speakers as lacking full proficiency in at least one language. On the other hand, recent scholarship (García, 2009) critiqued this static definition of bilingualism, stressing the flexible use of both languages in the everyday life of a bilingual person. Instead of a focus on full proficiency in one or more languages, strategic code switching between languages is crucial to this new understanding of bilingualism. García (2009; 2011) developed a new term, “translanguaging,” to describe the process of using multiple languages simultaneously.

Several other terms have been developed to refer to certain types of bilingual proficiency as implied in the diagram above (Figure 1). A native-like control over both languages, symbolized by AB and BA in the middle of the continuum, is often referred to as “balanced bilingualism” (García, 2009, p. 44). Balanced bilinguals are ideally able to express any and all levels of communication in more than one language. In reality, however, such accomplishment is rare. Most bilingual speakers are to some degree dominant in one language, often called “incipient bilinguals” or “emerging bilinguals” (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 137). In addition, linguists have pointed out that “rarely is anyone equally competent in two or more languages across all situations” (Baker, 2011, p. 8). Instead, most bilinguals use their two languages for different purposes and with different people. These domains or contexts of language use may include the home, school, shopping, media, hobbies, religion, and so on. Thus for some bilinguals, “family and emotional matters may be most comfortably expressed in one language, while conversations about work may be most fluently discussed in another” (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 137). Similarly, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) reported that for Spanish HL speakers “settings requiring strong emotional expression are the proper realm of Spanish [and] English remains the language of work and shopping” (p. 122).

Moreover, even if a person acquires a native-like command of both languages across all situations in the spoken form, he or she may not necessarily have literacy skills in both languages. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2010) pointed out that some people are “best able to express emotions and feelings in their native language but are better able to read, write, and argue in their new language” (p. 151). Although literacy skills are often included under the broad term *bilingualism*, some authors use a more specific term of *biliteracy* (Baker, 2011) to refer to reading and writing abilities in two languages. In this dissertation I use bilingualism as an overarching term; biliteracy thus constitutes a specific case of bilingualism. Bilingualism refers to a degree of fluency in a spoken or written form of two languages.

According to Valdés (2001), most immigrant-origin children can be defined as bilinguals with a degree of proficiency in the two languages, typically first being dominant in the HL, and later becoming dominant in English. Among children of immigrants, however, learning English too often involves a decline in their proficiency of the HL, eventually leading to an HL loss (Fillmore, 1991). This trend is unfortunate for two reasons. First, a successful retention of the HL language is beneficial for the wellbeing of immigrant families and communities, while HL loss has negative effects. Second, HL retention can lead to balanced bilingualism of the children, providing additional advantages.

Benefits of HL retention for immigrant families. Research shows that transmission of the HL across generations in children of immigrants is linked to a stronger family cohesiveness, preservation of respect for parents and parental authority, and a healthy social and emotional development of the child (Portes & Hao, 2002). In addition, “children who learn the language and culture of their new country without losing those of the old have a much better understanding of their place in the world” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 274). HL maintenance also provides children with more opportunities to receive educational, social, and cultural resources from their parents and immigrant communities. Conversely, the loss of the ethnic language and a rapid transition to English among children of immigrants weakens ties between parents and children and is linked to intergenerational alienation and conflict (Carreon et al., 2005; Kouritzin, 1999). With the rapid linguistic and cultural assimilation of the children, immigrant parents lose their authority as a source of guidance in the new world. In addition, a growing language barrier between parents and children may weaken communication between immigrant generations. In cases when immigrant parents cannot communicate in English well and their U.S.-born children are not able or refuse to use the HL, fluent communication across generations becomes impossible, resulting in affective separation between parents and children. Kouritzin (1999) reported that because of the language barrier, children of immigrants were able

to deceive their parents about school activities or report cards, about the price of things they needed for school, ... about the courses they were taking in high school, about the precise gender mix, location, and nature of parties, about relationships, about drug use. (p. 173-4)

On a similar note, Wiley (1993) warned that the situation of the 1920s and 1930s in which the “widespread loss of parental authority” led to “the rise of juvenile delinquency among European American immigrant youth” (p. 426) may repeat itself again today because of the growing language barrier between immigrant generations. The difference in the pace of Americanization between children and their immigrant parents is referred to as a “dissonant acculturation” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), suggesting negative effects. “Selective acculturation,” on the other hand, refers to a type of adaptation that occurs when the ties and communication between parents and children are not broken, a path of adaptation closely linked with the preservation of the HL, resulting in fluent bilingualism.

Benefits of bilingualism. In addition to the family cohesiveness and fluent intergenerational communication, HL maintenance provides children, communities, and whole nations with additional benefits (Cummins, 2005; Lee & Suarez, 2009). Therefore, García (2009) insisted that bilingual education be treated as a desirable goal not only for national minorities and immigrant children, but also for all students in the mainstream classroom. She argued that, “bilingual education is *the only way* [emphasis in original] to educate children in twenty-first century” (p. 5) for a number of reasons.

First, knowledge of more than one language represents an advantage in the job market, where bilingualism is increasingly becoming a sought-after qualification. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) noted the demand for professionals and managers who can operate within more than one cultural code in the global economy. Bilingual speakers are needed in business, science, education, diplomacy, and many other social realms.

Second, bilingual children are better equipped to learn other languages, they show generally higher academic achievement and aspirations and lower dropout rates than monolinguals (Lee & Suarez,

2009, p. 146). Matute-Bianchi (1986) found that fully bilingual Mexican-American children performed better in school than those who lacked proficient bilingual skills. It is believed that students with proficiency in their HL perform better in school because of their flexible cognitive strategies, greater creativity, and a more developed abstract thinking (Baker, 2011; García, 2009). However, as Lee and Suarez (2009) note, “the key to promoting higher academic performance among immigrant children seems to lie in the development of not only oral proficiency in the heritage language, but also literacy skills” (p. 146). As documented by Lutz and Crist (2009), second-generation bi-literate Latino boys significantly outperformed boys who were less proficient in Spanish.

Third, bilinguals tend to have advanced interpersonal skills. Compared to monolingual speakers, bilinguals are better able to develop empathy and communicative sensitivity in dealing with people from a variety of backgrounds (García, 2009; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Thus, to sum up these three points, bilingual individuals have advantages over monolinguals in the linguistic, cognitive, and social development realms.

The fourth argument in favor of bilingualism focuses on the societal level. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) claim that “the presence of pools of citizens able to communicate fluently in English plus another language and to bridge the cultural gap among nations represents an important collective resource” (p. 273). Similarly, the American Association for Applied Linguistics recognized that bilingual speakers “can contribute to American society by expanding the pool of linguistic resources available to the country, which can be advantageous in a global economy for international relations and for security purposes” (Achugar, 2008). In this sense, Au (2008) considered HLs a “much underappreciated national treasure” and claimed that maintenance of HLs “is much needed in bridging cultures within our nation and across nations” (p. 338). Finally, Tucker (2008) warned that a large majority of Americans are lacking sufficient bilingual proficiency and cross-cultural competence and thus are not able to compete with foreign

university graduates for positions requiring such abilities even at home, within the American job market.

The importance of HL maintenance among immigrants is widely recognized. Au (2008) warned that,

when children lose their heritage languages, everyone loses something. The children and their parents may be unable to bond in a language that both are most comfortable with, the community loses its cultural heritage, and the nation loses human resources much needed in bridging cultures within communities and across nations. (p. 337)

For all these reasons it is imperative that HL maintenance leading to bilingualism be valued and cultivated in children of immigrants. In reality, however, most children of immigrants today tend to lose their HL over the course of their lives, or never learn it in the first place (Kouritzin, 1991). As described below, the main reason for the lack of bilingualism among the second generation is not a poor command of English but rather the insufficient proficiency in the HL.

Language Loss among Immigrants

A gradual loss of HLs among immigrants in the United States happens both across generations and within the lifespan of individuals. “Language shift” typically refers to the change in language preference and proficiency across generations (Fishman, 1991; 2001), and “language attrition” generally denotes a decreasing competency in the mother tongue for individuals (Baker, 2011; García, 2009). “Language loss” is an overarching term for both of these processes.

While I use the term “second generation immigrants” throughout this dissertation, it is a rather contentious and problematic term. U.S.-born children of immigrants do have an immigrant background but they are American citizens by birth. Referring to these people as immigrants perpetuates the notion that they are foreigners to this country, people who need to adapt in some ways in order to be able to fully participate in the society. Such definition employs a deficit perspective, othering large groups of citizens based on the immigrant status of their parents. These children may indeed be approached

positively and studied as first-generation Americans or “American transnational people” (Cervantes-Soon, 2014); people with new and diverse forms of social and cultural capital. In addition, some of these transnational people may have dual citizenship, raising further questions about the terminology and their belonging. Thus a more cosmopolitan view of these populations may be appropriate. Still, because of its widespread use in immigration literature I use the term second generation in this dissertation to demonstrate the differences in HL proficiency between immigrant parents and their children. However, it should be kept in mind that this definition is highly problematic for theoretical and practical reasons.

Language shift. Linguists Fishman (1966; 1991) and Veltman (1983) long ago described a pattern of the language shift among immigrants as happening within three generations. According to this model, the first generation is dominant in the HL, the second generation becomes dominant in English while retaining some command of the HL, and by the third generation most knowledge of the foreign language is lost, because it is supported neither outside nor inside the home. Examining the applicability of this three-generation model of linguistic assimilation, Alba, Logan, Lutz, and Stults (2002) used 1990 census data to compare the HL use over generations across language groups. They found that “Anglicization is occurring at roughly the same pace for Asians as it did for Europeans, but is slower among the descendants of Spanish speakers” (p. 467). Similarly, Rong and Preissle (2009), based on their analysis of the 2000 census data, reported that HLs in the United States are essentially lost or replaced by English by the third generation. The major shift towards monolingualism happens during the second generation for both European and Asian children; however, it tends to be in the third generation for Hispanic children (Rong & Preissle, 2009).

The pattern of language loss across generations is also evident from results of a recent large survey, the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles Survey (IIMMLA), in which almost 5000 adults of Hispanic and Asian origin were included. Rumbaut (2009) analyzed the HL

use, proficiency, and preference by generation, showing the decline in the use of the HL at home, the dropping proficiency in the HL, as well as the growing preference for English across generations. He used the concepts of 2.5 generation to refer to children with only one foreign-born parent, and 3.5 generation to refer to children with only one or two foreign-born grandparents. Larger differences in HL proficiency were found also between 1st and 1.5 generation, between 2nd and 2.5 generations, and between 3rd and 3.5 generations. Table 1 summarizes the findings.

Table 1. Heritage language competency across generations

Generation	Growing up spoke a non-English language at home (%)	Speaks non-English language very well (%)	Prefers to speak only English at home (%)
1.0 (arrived 13 or older)	97.4	86.9	17.7
1.5 (arrived 0-12)	92.9	46.6	60.7
2.0 (2 foreign-born parents)	83.5	36.1	73.4
2.5 (1 foreign-born parent)	46.5	17.3	92.5
3.0 (3-4 foreign-born grandparents)	34.3	11.9	97.0
3.5 (1-2 foreign-born grandparents)	18.7	3.1	98.3

Source: Rumbaut (2009, p. 47)

While the majority of recent research on language shift in the United States has focused on Spanish speakers and immigrants from Asia, much less attention has been paid to the situation of other minority-language groups, namely those of European origin. Only a few newer studies targeted the experiences of Eastern European immigrants, mainly those speaking Russian (Kagan, 2005; Polinsky, 2008) and Romanian (Nesteruk, 2010) languages. However, these studies often focus more on the linguistic rather than on the social dimension of language loss. Alba (1990; 2005) has long been documenting immigration from Europe, including immigration from central and Eastern Europe. In a survey of over 500 random residents in New York State, Alba (1990) found that among those exposed to a language other than English in their childhood, only half could speak the language and less than one fourth used the mother tongue in their daily lives. Confirming the general pattern of language loss

across generations, Alba (1990) found a “steep drop-off in knowledge and use of a mother tongue between second and later generations” (p. 107). In his study, third-generation immigrants were 28% less likely than the second generation to use the HL.

However, some researchers today (Fillmore, 1991; 2000; Kouritzin, 1999) claim that language shift has accelerated lately and that the HL is often lost entirely by second generation. Crawford (2008) argued based on census data that “the pace of Anglicization in this country has never been faster” (p. 10). Similarly, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found that, “while over 90% of the [second-generation] sample report knowing a language other than English, their fluency in that language is significantly poorer” (p. 119). Having applied a language proficiency measure, they found that no second-generation ethnic group could be, on average, considered fluent in their parents’ native language. Spanish-speaking ethnic groups have scored generally higher than other language groups but were still far from fluent in the HL. This increased erosion of HLs in recent years might be the result of a decline in active usage of HLs within communities as Reese and Goldenberg (2006, p. 45) pointed out on an example of a Puerto Rican community in New York studied twice over the course of twenty years. While in the early 1980 Spanish was used for multiple purposes in the community, 20 years later the use of Spanish became limited to communication with the older generation. The recent push for English-only instruction may be playing a major role in this process, strongly discouraging the use of HLs outside of the family context (Crawford, 2008).

In addition to decreasing fluency in the spoken HL, literacy skills represent a major indicator of language shift across generations. Literacy skills in the HL are almost never learned by the second generation (Garcia & Diaz, 1992; Tse, 2001a) and a large gap exists between the ability to speak the HL and the ability to read and/or write in the HL across language groups. Tse (2001b) argued that, “literacy is the first victim of language loss across generations [and that] even if the second generation retains the

ability to speak the language to some degree, reading and writing seldom gets developed to any appreciable level” (p. 32). This pattern is attributed to the general lack of opportunities of second-generation immigrants to receive a formal education in the HL.

Language attrition. Beside language loss across occurring across generations, the ability to use and understand the HL decreases within the lifespan of individuals if not supported by ethnic community, schools, and the larger society. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) claimed that “of all the distinct legacies transmitted across generations, language is arguably the most important, but it is also the most difficult to transmit because of strong opposing forces” (p. 114). Although young children tend to prefer the HL to English, their knowledge of the HL recedes with the beginning of the compulsory schooling, being gradually replaced by English. Researchers (Fillmore, 1991; Nesteruk, 2010; Polinsky, 2008) documented cases of children who had stopped using Russian, Romanian, and other languages actively, as they entered kindergarten. Without an active use, the children’s ability to express themselves in the HL began decreasing markedly, followed by a drop in their passive understanding of the HL. Thus, within the lifespan of a second-generation immigrant, it is most typically around age 5 when English takes precedence over the home language.

Still, HL attrition has been documented even on a preschool level, depending on the children’s exposure to English. Fillmore (1991) surveyed about 1,000 immigrant families from different language backgrounds, including Latinos, Asians, Arabs, American Indians, and others. Some families had placed their children in English-only preschool programs, others in bilingual, and yet others in HL preschool programs (all of these were Spanish-speaking families). Fillmore (1991) found that early exposure to English, such as in a preschool setting, led to a faster language loss.

In general, with time of exposure to the English-only environment of American schools, children of immigrants tend to use less and less of the HL and eventually come to prefer English overwhelmingly.

Zhou (2001) conducted a study with a sample of 363 Vietnamese teenagers and found that HL declined with age while English proficiency increased. Similarly, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) and Rumbaut, Massey, and Bean (2009) documented the second-generation language use and preferences in more detail based on the *Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS)*, a large study exploring the patterns of adaptation among second-generation immigrants in San Diego, CA and Miami, FL. Following 5,000 second-generation youth for several years, this study clearly showed the children's growing proficiency in English, growing preference for English, as well as a gradual decrease in the knowledge of and preference for the HL. The preference for English grew rapidly over time, from 72% of second-generation children preferring English to their parents' language in junior high school to 88% by the end of high school. With an exception of Spanish, children of most other language backgrounds, such as Chinese, French, Hmong, or Lao, prefer English overwhelmingly in rates as high as 99%. The results not only document that knowledge of English among second-generation immigrants is nearly universal, but also that English is the preferred language for a majority of second-generation students, although an HL was spoken in almost all these immigrant homes. Similarly, Hakuta and D'Andrea (1992) found on a sample of over 300 second-generation HL speakers that children's language use and preference had shifted markedly from Spanish to English between elementary and high school.

The process in which the introduction of a new language leads to the loss of the first language is called "subtractive bilingualism" (García, 2009). During the process of schooling, most children of immigrants in the United States are unable to receive any institutional support to maintain and to further develop their proficiency in the HL. Their knowledge of the language atrophies over time such that by adulthood, second-generation immigrants typically become markedly dominant or even monolingual in English. Kouritzin (1999) studied the experiences of second-generation immigrants from various linguistic backgrounds with HL attrition and recorded numerous stories of adults who had

entirely lost the HL during their lifespan. Some of the participants admitted a complete inability to understand the language of their parents. Others shared that, when listening to a tape-recorded conversation between themselves and their mother in the HL, they were unable to understand what they had been saying. For most of the participants, the experience with HL loss was heartbreaking. Still, while some children do become fluent in the HL early in their lives and later lose this proficiency, others may never have the chance to learn the native language properly in the first place, even if only its spoken form (Kouritzin, 1999).

Social context of language learning and migration. What are the major causes of language loss across immigrant generations as well as with a lifespan of individuals? Many have argued that the strong societal push toward English is to blame for the rapid disappearance of HLs in the United States (Crawford, 2008; Fishman, 2001; Lee & Suarez, 2009; Wiley & Lee, 2009). Schooling plays an important role in the language assimilation process in this country, promoting English at the expense of HLs.

Throughout U.S. history, “ethnic and linguistic diversity has been positioned in a negative and problematic light” (Wiley & Lee, 2009, p. 6). Schools in the United States generally promoted English, neglecting the linguistic resources children of immigrants had brought with them from home. The push for English-only approach seems to strengthen specifically during the times of increased immigration and during wars. At the turn of the 19th century, with the third wave of immigrants entering the United States, the Americanization movement arose as a reaction to the growing ethnic and linguistic diversity. It led to a strong focus on English and to restriction of foreign language instruction that had been in place before. Similarly, during World War I and II the teaching of German and Japanese languages in U.S. schools was prohibited (Wiley & Lee, 2009). On the other hand, during the time of peace and in between the larger waves of immigration, foreign language instruction and bilingual education seem to have been more acceptable.

Today, we find ourselves in the midst of another large and diverse wave of immigration. Similarly to the situation of hundred years ago, the recent movement toward an English-only approach “seems to have been fueled by a tide of escalating anti-immigrant sentiments throughout the country” (Tucker, 2008, p. 40). One recent example of the various attempts to re-instill the English-only approach was California’s Proposition 227, also called *English for the Children initiative*. Passed in 1998, it was an attempt to eliminate bilingual education, suggesting that any teaching of HLs would interfere with English language acquisition, and that the best way for children to learn English is to be immersed in English-speaking classrooms (Cummins, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). A similar measure, Proposition 203, was approved in 2000 in Arizona, mandating that “all children in Arizona public schools shall be taught English by being taught in English” (Mahoney, Haladyna, & MacSwan, 2009, p. 241). Fueled also by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, requiring states to adopt a single-language proficiency assessment (Mahoney et al., 2009), “the English-only initiative is currently spreading rapidly through the United States. Over 20 states have passed official English laws, and over a dozen other states have comparable versions of similar legislation pending” (Rong & Preissle, 2009, p. 59-60). Common to all these policies is the emphasis on an abrupt shift from the HL to English as an integration strategy of the new linguistically and racially diverse immigrant groups. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) called this English-only approach a “forceful assimilationism” and they maintained that,

policies derived from this ideology de-legitimize the culture and language of parents (...). By instilling in children the sense that their parents’ language is inferior and should be abandoned in favor of English, schools help drive a wedge across generations, weakening parental efforts to preserve a common cultural memory. (p. 273)

What are the reasons, then, behind the policies that promote English fluency at any cost? What are the assumptions of the English-only approach? The arguments found in the literature range from fears about national unity and security to concerns about children’s achievement.

Reasoning behind the English-only movement. First, national unity is at the core of the argument for English-only movement (García, 2009; Lee & Suarez, 2009; Valdés, 2001). As Portes and Rumbaut (2001) note, “language assimilation is demanded of foreigners not only for instrumental reasons but for symbolic ones as well. It signals their willingness to seek admission into the circles of their new country, leaving past loyalties behind” (p. 113). In the United States the importance of a common language for national unity and identity is particularly important

because the country has few other elements on which to ground a sense of national identity. Made up of people coming from many different lands, lacking the unifying symbols of crown or millennial history, the common use of American English has come to acquire a singular importance as a binding tie across such a vast territory. (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 114)

However, it has been documented that speaking another language does not have to interfere with one’s American identity. Lee and Suarez (2009), for example, reported that immigrant children’s sense of Americanness is “not threatened but enhanced by having a better understanding of their own ethnic identity and competence in their heritage language” (p. 142).

Second, national security has been quoted as a reason for restricting the teaching of other languages throughout the history of the United States (Lee & Suarez, 2009; Mahoney et al., 2009). This would be the case of the forceful discontinuation of German and Japanese language classes during the time of the two World Wars (Wiley & Lee, 2009). Paradoxically, Rumbaut (2009) pointed out that “in recent years the *lack* of fluent bilinguals who can serve as reliable translators and interlocutors has emerged as a national security concern” (p. 66). Rumbaut reported that after September 11 intelligence agencies found “a dearth of bilingual speakers in newly critical languages” or that “among the 1000 people who worked in the US Embassy in Baghdad only six spoke Arabic fluently” (2009, p. 66). In 2003, the Modern language association in 2003 established a committee to examine the language crisis and to make recommendations for the teaching of foreign languages in colleges and universities (MLA, 2007).

Another reason used in support of the monolingual approach concerns educational outcomes and achievement of the children. Up to 1960s it was believed that bilingualism itself, or exposure to two or more languages, interfered with academic performance. Bilingualism and cognitive development were seen as negatively associated, bilingualism was even viewed as a “language handicap” (Hakuta & Garcia, 1989). These conclusions were made based on the children’s poor performance on various standardized tests in English and later recognized as ill founded. In fact, it has been documented that bilingual children outperform monolinguals in various measures (Hakuta, 1999; Hakuta & Díaz, 1985; Rumbaut, 1995).

Assumptions of English-only policies and practice. In addition to the unfounded reasoning as outlined above, Hakuta (1999) pointed out five assumptions underlying the English-only approach in American schools. First, this approach assumes that children are capable of acquiring English rapidly. Propositions 187 and 227 imply that an intense 1-year immersion is a sufficient time for children to acquire the academic language (Mahoney et al., 2009). However, linguistic literature (Baker, 2011; Cummins, 1986/2001; García, 2009) showed that academic proficiency in a second language takes more than a year to achieve. Although 1 year may be sufficient for the acquisition of the basic interpersonal communicative skills, it takes an average of 7 to 10 years of systematic training to acquire academic language skills (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010).

The second, perhaps the most often cited, assumption is that the exposure of children to their native language limits their exposure to English and thus delays their acquisition of English. However, this belief has been disproved by a number of studies (Cummins, 2005; García, 2009; Hakuta & Diaz, 1985). Linguists maintain that second-language acquisition and first-language acquisition are guided by cognitive principles common across languages and that a proficiency in one language enhances the chances of successful acquisition of another language. Thus HL maintenance and English language

acquisition should not be presented as an “either-or” choice (Lee & Suarez, 2009). Moreover, the fears of declining use of English among immigrant populations are supported neither within the United States nor elsewhere. Rumbaut (2009) found that English “is certainly not threatened today, not even in Southern California or South Florida” (p. 67), regions with a high concentration of Spanish speakers.

The third assumption driving the English-only movement in this country is the belief that today’s immigrants do not want to learn English and that using the home language in schools would send the wrong message to the students and the community about the value of English. However, a number of studies have shown that immigrants today, even Hispanics, want to learn English and that they *do* learn English quite fast (Rumbaut et al., 2006; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). If anything is endangered, it is not English but the various HLs striving to survive in America under hostile conditions.

Fourth, it is a widespread belief that the support of HL maintenance, leading eventually to bilingualism, is a responsibility of the family and community, not of the public schools or government (Hakuta, 1999; Lee & Suarez, 2009). Lee and Oxelson (2006) document the attitudes of K-12 teachers towards students’ HL maintenance, summarizing the teachers’ approach with an eloquent quote: “It’s not my job.” However, increased levels of societal bilingualism benefit the whole country, and should be pursued by the education system (García, 2009).

Finally, a pragmatic reason cited in favor of the English-only approach – and against bilingual education – involves the costs of bilingual programs and the difficulties with implementation. In reality, as Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) note, perhaps the most common challenge “is the dearth of fully certified bilingual teachers who are trained in second language acquisition and who can serve as proper language models to their students” (p. 141). It is a challenge to find qualified teachers even for such popular languages as Mandarin, Cantonese, and Spanish. This situation can be seen, ironically, both as the reason for and the consequence of the monolingual schooling in the United States.

The case of bilingual and heritage language education in the United States. The general trend of HL loss can be slowed down if a child attends a bilingual school (Fishman, 1991; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In the United States, a number of different programs fall under the category of bilingual education but not all of them lead to HL retention. In fact, instead of fostering proficiency in two languages, most “bilingual” programs today are of a transitional kind, seeking to assist the children in a rapid language shift from the HL to English. Hakuta and Garcia (1989) observed that

There is hardly any dispute over the ultimate goal of the programs – to “mainstream” students in monolingual English classrooms with maximal efficiency. The tension has centered on the specific instructional role of the native language: How long, how much, and how intensely should it be used? (p. 376)

The description is applicable still today. In fact, the use of current-day bilingual education programs is quite in line with the philosophy of the original *Bilingual Education Act* of 1968, which was legalized in order “to provide educational support to poor children who were ‘educationally disadvantaged because of their inability to speak English’ ” (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 138). Moreover, García (2005) documented that, since the 1990s there has been a shift in the rhetoric on language and immigration, moving away from the term *bilingual* towards the term *English language acquisition*, thus generally silencing the whole discourse on “bilingual education” or “minority languages.” Examples of some official name changes include a switch from “Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs” to “Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement for LEP students,” a change from “National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education” to “National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs,” or finally from “Title VII of Elementary and Secondary Education Act: The Bilingual Education Act” to “Title III of The No Child Left Behind, Public Law 107-110: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students” (García, 2005, p. 604). As a result, and

an irony of the situation, the only programs that do support proficiency in the HL and could be considered true bilingual education – the *two-way immersion programs* and the *dual language programs* – have been forced to move away from using the very term *bilingual*.

In both the public school programs and the community-supported out-of-school programs “the teaching of heritage languages is marginalized with respect to funding provisions, number of languages involved, and number of students who participate” (Cummins, 2005, p. 585). Small language minorities, such as Czechs and Slovaks, are typically left out of the conversation entirely. Sweley (2006) pointed out that the discussion about HL learning in the United States is quite limited, focusing only on a few languages, such as Spanish and Chinese. Although the need for teaching of other HLs has been acknowledged since the 1990s, at least in academic research, Sweley (2006) noted that, “aside from Spanish and Chinese HL programs, which are generally well established and organized, a dearth of information exists regarding HL programs and how to successfully implement them” (p. 21). Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (2001) wrote:

While many view the mastery of a second or third language to be a clear advantage in this era of global capitalism and transnationalism, the public has deep reservations about teaching immigrant children in their native languages. Rather than being viewed as a potential asset to be cultivated, the linguistic skills brought by newly arrived immigrants are seen by many as a threat to the integrity of the English language and as a symbolic refusal to accommodate to American culture. (p. 136)

In other words, what is perceived as a resource for middle-class American families is, for some reason, portrayed as a deficit for immigrants. Hornberger (1998) argued that HLs were too often seen as a handicap rather than as a resource. As a result, the effort to cultivate HLs remains in the hands of immigrant families and ethnic communities. As such, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) pointed out that

the irony of the situation is that many immigrant families are doing for American society what it will not do for itself: raising law-abiding, achievement-oriented, and bilingual citizens in the teeth of the obstacles stemming from intransigent nativism and forceful assimilation. (p. 276)

Repeatedly documenting the power of language shift, several researchers today (Rumbaut, 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010) made use of a metaphor introduced long ago by Lieberman, Dalto, and Jonston (1975) and referred to the United States as a “cemetery for languages.” In their study Lieberman et al. (1975) found that, ironically, in no other country has the transition towards monolingualism been so fast and the disappearance of foreign languages as thorough as in the United States, the country of immigrants. Today, the numbers of immigrants in the United States is growing, and their cultural, social, and linguistic backgrounds are as diverse as never before. As Rong and Preissle (2009) reported, over 47 million people aged 5 and older spoke a language other than English at home in 2000 and the total number of HL speakers had increased by more than 100% from 1980 to 2000. In the public school system, 20% of all children were considered children of immigrants in 2005. Thus, the number of HL speakers might represent an enormous linguistic resource for the country. However, it is often ignored, discouraged, and undermined, rather than utilized and cultivated, by the U.S. schools.

Conditions Contributing to Heritage Language Retention

The cultivation of an HL requires time, effort, and resources. Nesteruk (2010) noted that the factors contributing to bilingualism among children of immigrants were namely the HL use at home, neighborhood language diversity, institutional support, and more generally the national language policies. Lee and Suarez (2009) reviewed literature concerning the HL maintenance process and found ethnic community, family, and the will of the individual to be central to HL maintenance. For Portes and Rumbaut (2001), the most consistent predictors of bilingualism among second generation proved to be the existence of a strong ethnic community, the type of school (bilingual versus monolingual) that children attended, and HL use at home. In addition, Tse (2001a) highlighted the importance of exposure to the HL, the opportunities to learn the HL, one’s sense of ethnic identity, and finally the perceived

value of the HL. Similarly, prestige of the particular language is believed to positively affect HL retention (Fishman, 1991). In addition, as Rong and Preissle (2009) noted, maintenance of the HL is “affected by many *uncontrollable* [emphasis in original] factors, such as place of birth, age of arrival, length of U.S. residency, years of schooling in the first language, social class, parental education, and such” (p. 60).

While the conditions affecting HL maintenance are multiple, most scholars emphasize that no single factor can guarantee HL retention and development because of the strong counteractive forces in society, such as the monolingual nature of schooling (Lee and Suarez, 2009). In other words, parents or communities alone have limited ability to revitalize these languages. Instead, the support must come from a number of contexts. Tse (2001a) concluded, based on her research with successful biliterate second-generation immigrants, that HLs are best promoted when

home, community, and school work in concert to reverse the stigma of non-English languages and to provide students with the necessary social, cultural, language, and literacy experiences. To be successful, these efforts require the validation and support of powerful institutions that possess the requisite resources and legitimacy, such as those held by schools. (p. 702)

Conversely, when parents do not have the support of an immigrant community, schools, and society, their children are much less likely to learn and retain the HL, such as may be the case of Czechs and Slovaks living in the southeastern United States. The most important factors contributing to HL retention are examined below and include: active HL use within the family, presence of an ethnic community, perceived prestige of the language, and a sense of an ethnic identity.

Family language practices. Language practices at home are thought to be one of the strongest predictors of HL maintenance (Hakuta & D’Andrea, 1992). Immigrant family is the place of the first and most intense contact with the HL for the child. Moreover, language practices within the family are particularly relevant to the situation of the Czechs and Slovaks in this study as they lack other resources necessary for successful HL retention. For many, family remains the sole agent of HL maintenance.

Parental goals. Parents generally strive to transmit their native language to their children and have high hopes in terms of children's HL proficiency (Farruggio, 2010; Li, 2005; Yang, 2007). The reasons for their effort are multiple. Cho, Cho, and Tse (1997) specifically examined the motivations for HL maintenance among 24 Korean-American students, finding the importance of "both family- and career-related reasons for developing their HL, including the desire to improve communication with parents and relatives, to develop closer association with the Korean-American community, and to expand career options" (p. 106). Through HL maintenance, some immigrant parents hope to cultivate a sense of an ethnic identity in the children, others aim to pass on the language as a piece of a cultural heritage, still others hope to provide their children with the intellectual and material benefits of bilingualism, and many parents wish to maintain a close relationship between the children and their extended family overseas (Nesteruk, 2010, Yang, 2007; Yang, 2008; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

Positive attitudes of parents play an important role in HL maintenance. However, many immigrant parents face challenges in their effort to transmit the HL to their children. Parents often work hard to establish themselves in a new country and they might find little time or energy for HL maintenance, especially in terms of teaching their children HL literacy skills. In fact, parents often use the little time they have to help their children succeed in school, which involves mainly assistance with homework in English (Nesteruk, 2010; Tse, 2001b). Lao (2004), for example, surveyed 86 Chinese parents and found that the expectations and language practices of parents were not aligned. A majority of the parents admitted they did not follow their original plans and that they spoke more English at home than they had intended. In addition, children may have quite a different agenda and refuse to learn the HL, often failing to see any relevance of the HL to their own lives in the United States (Tuominen, 1999; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Kondo (1997) pointed out that the "mother's choices [alone] cannot determine children's behavior" (p. 369).

Home language use. The single most important practice is simply using the HL, and the HL *only*, in daily conversations at home. Parents who speak to the children in the HL at home exclusively and who also require the children to respond in the HL seem to have the best chance of raising a bilingual child (Bayley et al., 1996; Nesteruk, 2010; Tse, 2001b). Bayley et al. (1996) believed that the success of Spanish maintenance in one Mexican-American family in Texas was attributable to

the parents' insistence that the children use Spanish among themselves, the relative isolation of the ranch on which the family lived [which reduced contact with English-speaking peers], and frequent visits to Mexico and contact with monolingual Spanish-speaking relatives. (p. 389)

Similarly, an older study with Romanian immigrants (Roceric, 1982) documented the importance parents put on the children's active usage of Romanian in the home. Some parents in this study

wouldn't pay attention to their offspring if addressed in English, did not answer questions, and went so far as to cut down on food for children who gradually had more and more difficulties with Romanian, since they enrolled in American schools. (Roceric, 1982, p. 38)

A woman with this experience recalled: "When [the father] said I was not going to eat, words [in Romanian] started to come to me all of a sudden" (Roceric, 1982, p. 38). Today, such a radical approach is much less common although immigrant parents regret that their children stop using the HL with them and that there is nothing to be done to change the situation (Kondo, 1997; Nesteruk, 2010; Yang, 2008). Hereto Fillmore (2000) suggested that immigrant parents should be encouraged to use the HL at home, talk with and read to their children in that language, and expect "mature speech" from them. In addition, teachers should also encourage this effort. It was documented that without the support of a language school, very few families manage to teach the HL systematically (Park & Sarkar, 2007).

Additional strategies of HL maintenance include reading books, telling stories, showing videos and cartoons in the HL, and using the Internet (Nesteruk, 2010; Park & Sarkar, 2007). However, deeper understanding of how these strategies are used and whether they are successful is missing. Tse (2001a) argues that an access to written materials is essential to develop any degree of literacy in the HL.

A strategy increasingly adopted by immigrant parents to support their children's HL learning is the usage of long visits to the parents' home country (Nesteruk, 2010; Rong, 2005). Rong (2005) documented that sojourning has become a common practice among Chinese immigrants, with the goal to support and revitalize children's ethnic identities and HL proficiency. Rong (2005) noted that this strategy may be particularly important in situations when the immigrant family lives outside of an ethnic community, able to find only very few co-nationals in their area, such as Chinese in the southern United States. As a result of the sojourn, the children in Rong's (2005) study developed a firsthand knowledge of the Chinese culture and became motivated to learn more about the country and the language. Visiting in a place where their ethnic culture and language were a majority rather than a minority culture helped the children embrace their origins and construct a positive identity as Chinese-Americans. Rong (2005) also observed that following the visits "parents and children found they had much more in common when discussing issues related to China and to the extended family members and friends still living there" (p. 180). Overall, these visits of 3 to 6 months helped build a foundation for a bicultural and bilingual development of the children. Kondo (1997) documented a similar strategy among Japanese mothers in Hawaii who chose to send their children to be educated in Japan, not only for a visit.

In addition to HL use at home and sojourning, some Eastern European immigrants choose to bring grandparents to the United States for prolonged periods of time. The grandparents are to assist with childcare as well as to help improve the children's HL skills and to pass on their ethnic heritage (Nesteruk, 2010). In Eastern Europe, grandparents typically play a vital role in childrearing, maintaining very close relationships with their grandchildren. Nesteruk and Marks (2009) documented that when a child is born in Eastern European immigrant family in the United States, grandparents typically come to stay for 6 months at a time. While HL use by the parents may be the most common strategy, sojourning and grandparents' visits seem to contribute to HL maintenance of the children in important ways.

Demographic characteristics of the family. The last set of factors documented to affect HL maintenance on the family level are demographic characteristics. While family composition or birth order of children seem to serve as more or less consistent predictors of HL retention, the impacts of other characteristics, such as parental education or their English proficiency, are much less clear.

Family composition. It has been documented that children growing up in families where both parents share the same linguistic background and use the HL at home have the greatest chance of becoming bilingual (Alba et al., 2002; Lee & Suarez, 2009; Portes & Hao, 1998). Rumbaut (2009) reported that only about 11% of children with one foreign-born parent could speak the mother tongue compared to about 25% of those with two foreign-born parents from the same linguistic background. Similarly, only 7.5% of adults with one foreign-born parent use some HL in their daily interactions compared to 26.6% of adults with two foreign-born parents. It is typically the case in mixed marriages that one parent is fully bilingual while the other is monolingual (“Mixed Marriages,” 2012). Therefore, much of the conversation between spouses occurs in English and HL is only used between one parent and the child. In this dissertation, a *mixed marriage* is defined as a marriage between a foreign-born person whose native language is not English and a U.S.-born person whose native language is English.

Today the formation of mixed or intercultural families is becoming more common than ever before. Of an estimated 30 million second-generation individuals in the United States in 1997, approximately half of them had only one foreign-born parent (14.3 million) versus 15.7 million with both foreign-born parents (Jensen, 2001). Additionally, “those with only one foreign-born parent are more likely to be White than those with two (67.6% and 44.7%)” (Jensen, 2001, p. 33). Still, language practices in mixed marriages constitute a largely understudied phenomenon with only two exceptions (Lam, 2011; Shin, 2010), both very recent. Shin (2010) examined linguistic experiences of 12 adults raised in mixed marriages with Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese HL. She attributed the lack of HL

proficiency in her participants to limited exposure to the HL and to the parents' and children's reluctance to use the HL, caused mainly by the societal and personal pressures to shift to English. Lam (2011) focused on Vietnamese immigrants and related stories of four families in her dissertation. She found parental attitudes to the HL to be an important factor, namely the perceived importance of the language and parental "willingness to push . . . their children to learn the HL" (p. 170). However, neither study compared the home linguistic environment of the mixed-marriage families to all-immigrant families. My research joins these pioneering studies in its focus on HL maintenance strategies and practices in mixed-marriage families. Furthermore, this dissertation compares and contrasts the linguistic environments in the two types of families.

Birth order of children. It has been documented that birth order of children matters for their chances to develop into fluent bilinguals (Fillmore, 1991; Shin, 2002). Parents tend to be more successful in transmitting the HL to their firstborn child and less successful with subsequent children. Firstborn children typically receive more one-on-one interaction with their caretakers as compared to their younger siblings and immigrant parents generally speak more often in the HL to the firstborn than to the later-born children (Shin, 2002). This shift in a family language use is believed to be a consequence of the oldest child's entering school (Fillmore, 1991; Hakuta & D'Andrea, 1992). As a result of the exposure to English and of the positive valuation of English in schools and wider society, older children tend to switch to English and use this language increasingly even with siblings in a family environment. Thus, the younger sibling is exposed to the HL even less because of the older sibling's shift to English. Still, Tuominen (1999) showed that even in families where both parents shared the same linguistic background, the children tended to switch to English with the beginning of their school attendance.

Other demographic markers. Other, more specific parental characteristics, such as income, level of education, knowledge of English, and time of arrival, are believed to influence HL retention and loss

among second generation. However, available research studies often bring contradictory findings. While some researchers claimed that high levels of parental education and income increased the probability of the children to speak only English (Alba et al., 2002), other sources maintain that high socioeconomic status of parents contributes to HL preservation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Data used by these scholars came from large quantitative surveys, only confirming that qualitative approach is needed to better understand the inner workings of these processes.

The factors to be considered are multiple and may interact in unique ways. While lower socioeconomic status may result in fewer resources and time to pursue the HL, living within a low-income ethnic community may foster wider HL use. Tuominen (1999), for example, examined 18 immigrant families of various linguistic backgrounds and studied how parents attempted to transmit and maintain the HLs. She argued parents' lower socioeconomic status and level of education contributed to the children's faster shift towards English, "because poor and less-educated parents have few resources to help [the children] with home language maintenance" (p. 59). On the other hand, Reese and Goldenberg (2006) found that Spanish was easier maintained in a low-income community, perhaps because of the presence of the numerous family-owned businesses. They described an interesting dynamic between social class and HL learning and retention, pointing out that

as families seek to improve living conditions and life chances for their children by moving into an area that is more upscale, safer, and quieter, they also are moving into an area in which access to Spanish literacy and use of Spanish for a variety of social functions is not as easy. (p. 57)

As evident from the contradicting conclusions, the role of parental education and social class in HL maintenance is complicated and more research is needed on this topic. This dissertation examines experiences of parents who are generally well educated and fluent in English.

Ethnic community and HL maintenance. In addition to home language use, immigrant children who have the opportunity to use their native language across social domains and in public (such as with extended family, at church, in the neighborhood, in ethnic restaurants and stores, at work) are more likely to maintain it into adulthood (Fishman, 2001; Lee & Suarez, 2009; Tse, 2001b). A larger residential concentration of speakers of a particular language is typically necessary to provide such contexts for HL use. An ethnic community provides numerous opportunities for the children to learn and use the HL as well as validation of the HL. Opportunities for public use of the HL legitimize the language in the eyes of the U.S.-born children. In some larger communities the HL plays an essential role as a means of communication and in some cases, proficiency in the ethnic language may be a necessary condition for a full participation in the community. When children see the usefulness of a language as a means of communication, they are more likely to learn it (Cho, Cho, & Tse, 1997; Tse, 2001a). However, for many Eastern European families, especially in the southeastern United States, living within a large community is not the case. Today's Czech and Slovak immigrants are much more geographically dispersed than in the past, offering little chance for establishment of functional ethnic communities with their institutions.

Language exposure. Language learning and maintenance requires opportunities for “language modeling” (Baker, 2011). When parents (or only one parent in the case of a mixed-marriage family) are the only people to speak the HL, the children have fewer opportunities to hear linguistic exchanges among heritage speakers and to model such interactions. Thus, a major asset of a large ethnic community is the number of practical opportunities to use and to learn the HL (Roceric, 1982; Zecker, 2004). Celebration of cultural traditions, religious occasions, or the use of the HL in ethnic stores and restaurants provides the children with a diversified language input, including vocabulary that would not be typically used in a home setting (García, 2009). Furthermore, opportunities for peer contact represent another crucial factor of HL retention (Fillmore, 1991).

Having examined HL development of Spanish-speaking children in two communities in southern California, Reese and Goldenberg (2006) found that an active use of Spanish within one community has made a difference in children's HL skills. Although Spanish instruction was provided in both communities at a local elementary school and books in Spanish were available in school libraries in both places, the use of Spanish outside of the home and school differed significantly between the two localities. Reese and Goldenberg (2006) documented that in one community

43 different commercial establishments and institutional settings offered services in Spanish, while 40 offered services in English (or English as well as Spanish). Thus, in this community, any service offered that would involve access via reading or writing—for example, filling out forms to send money to relatives in Mexico—could be carried out in Spanish or English. (p. 52-53)

In the other community, however, only two among its 210 commercial institutions offered services in Spanish, and much less Spanish was heard in public places such as the community park. In this setting one needed to use English, both written and spoken, for most social encounters and formal occasions. Children in the first community, although with a lower socioeconomic background, scored higher on Spanish literacy assessments than children in the latter, confirming the importance of an active usage of the language within a community for HL retention.

When an ethnic community is not widespread enough parents often make conscious efforts to arrange play dates with families of the same linguistic background in order for their young children to hear and practice the language outside the family (Nesteruk, 2010). For some eastern European immigrants in the southeastern United States, finding peers of the same language background may take effort and involve a longer commute. However, even during these carefully planned encounters children tend to speak English among themselves (Nesteruk, 2010).

Another option to increase the children's exposure to the HL is to seek extracurricular activities and hobbies that involve the HL, the heritage culture, or simply a native language speaker in the target

language. Nesteruk (2010) reported that in order to provide their children with additional opportunities to speak Russian, several of her participants selected Russian music teachers, skating and dance instructors, math tutors, nannies, childcare providers, and so on. However, she noted that not all Russian-speaking immigrants in the United States have such an option. European-origin parents from other linguistic backgrounds, such as Czechs or Slovaks, are even less likely to find services provided by native speakers of the target language in their area.

Language schools. In localities with sufficient numbers of speakers of a particular language, community language schools or ethnic language day-care centers might be available (Nesteruk, 2010; Tse, 2001b). Another option to study the HL in formal school settings is to enroll in traditional foreign language classes (Kondo-Brown, 2001). Foreign language instruction, however, is not intended to meet the needs of HL learners (Kagan, 2005; Randolph, 2011; Valdés, 2001).

Focus on HL schools has become popular in recent research, as a number of studies explored HL maintenance within a community language school setting. The languages studied included Korean (Park, 2008), Japanese (Kondo-Brown, 2001), Turkish (Otcu, 2010), Spanish (Randolph, 2011), and Chinese (Lao, 2004; Li, 2005; Yang, 2007). However, research on Slavic languages is largely missing.

The importance of HL learning in formal settings has been documented widely (Fishman, 1991; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Tse (2001a) designed a study to examine the experience of second-generation immigrants who have managed to develop literacy skills in both the HL and in English. Despite her thorough, almost nation-wide recruitment efforts, she was able to locate only 10 eligible young adults, most of them proficient in Spanish and English. In her study, she found that all of her participants experienced some kind of formal schooling in the HL for at least a period of time in addition to speaking only HL at home while growing up. They were also able to make use of other community resources, such as attending religious services in their HL or shopping in ethnic stores where the HL was used.

Realizing the difficulties associated with HL maintenance, some Japanese immigrants opt for an ambitious strategy combining HL schooling in the United States with an annual sojourn in Japan in order to raise bilingual children. They choose to (and are able to) enroll their children in Sunday schools organized by the Japanese embassy. The schools provide age-appropriate instruction of the Japanese curriculum in Japanese language during the school year in the United States. Then, in the summer, families travel to Japan and enroll their children in a regular Japanese public school for a month each year. This is possible because the Japanese school year finishes one month later than the school year in the United States (Kobayashi, 2011). This strategy appears effective, but it puts sizable demands on the children to manage both the American and Japanese schooling requirements at the same time.

For a large number of immigrant families, however, opportunities for formal HL instruction in the United States are scarce. Czech and Slovak community language schools, for instance, exist in only a few large U.S. cities with the majority of Czechs and Slovaks having no access to HL instruction. This situation is illustrative of many other language minorities in the United States today. Therefore, it is surprising that research has not addressed language needs and experiences of families living without the supports of an ethnic community.

Differences across language groups. People from language groups with larger communities tend to have better bilingual skills than others, confirming that ethnic community matters in HL retention. In the United States specifically, Mexican and other Latin-origin students are far more likely to become bilingual than students of other language backgrounds (Alba et al., 2002; Rong & Preissle, 2009; Rumbaut, 2009). Less than 10% of Asian and European-origin second-generation children retain fluency in their parents' languages along with English, while full 35% percent of Spanish language speakers are able to do so (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 136). In generation 2.5, the differences are even starker with

35% of Mexican-origin children proficient in their mother tongue compared to only 3% of White Europeans of the same generation (Rumbaut et al., 2006).

It is believed that the main reason for a higher percentage of bilinguals among Spanish-speaking immigrants is that Spanish is being used “by a large immigrant population, buttressed by institutions that include ethnic media such as newspapers, radio stations, and even major television networks” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 127). Additionally, a larger proportion of Spanish-speaking students in a school setting and in their friendship networks also significantly increase the chances of HL maintenance within this language group. For Asian-, Africa-, or European-origin students, on the other hand, HL retention is much less frequent because of the lack of a common language and the resulting absence of a linguistic community. Children of African ancestry today, for example, speak more than 50 different languages, and children of Asian immigrants use about 70 different languages. In addition, some languages have different dialects, such as Mandarin or Cantonese in the case of Chinese Americans (Rong & Preissle, 2009), making it less likely that a large enough group of the same linguistic origin would be found in a single location. Another advantage of Spanish heritage speakers over the speakers of various Asian- and African-origin languages is that as a western language, it is grammatically and phonetically closer to English than most Asian or African languages (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Still, even among Spanish-speaking second-generation immigrants, a language group with perhaps the most ethnic community resources in the country, fluent bilinguals constitute only a minority. Only among those attending private Spanish-English bilingual schools, the ratio of the youth considered as fluent bilinguals at the end of high school grew to about 60% (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Acquiring any literacy skills in the HL is even less common. A Miami businesswoman from Portes and Rumbaut’s (2001) large study, for example, asserted that, “there are 600,000 Hispanics in Miami, and we have hard time hiring a person who can write a proper business letter in Spanish” (p. 143).

Prestige of languages. Among the factors important for HL retention, in addition to home language use and ethnic community, is the prestige of the language. Scholars (Fishman, 1991; 2001; Park, 2008; Reese & Goldenberg, 2006) claimed that languages perceived as more valuable in a given society – or community – attract higher levels of language loyalty and tend to be maintained easier. Fishman (2001) described a series of stages of language vitality. A “high power” stage involves use of the language in higher education, employment, mass media, and government. On the other hand, a “lower power” stage refers to the knowledge of the language by only a few isolated speakers.

Higher levels of HL retention have been documented in cases when the HL is perceived as prestigious or useful, both locally and globally. Reese and Goldenberg (2006) studied Spanish HL use in two communities, and they found that in the community where Spanish was used by many businesses, children achieved higher levels of HL retention and literacy. In the other community, where most formal encounters happened in English, Spanish did not gain a status of a useful resource for communication outside the family, and children tended to shift towards English faster. Similarly, Tse (2001a) interviewed Spanish, Cantonese, and Japanese HL speakers in southern California who managed to become not only bilingual but also biliterate, and she discovered that “language vitality,” a belief that the particular HL is in some sense useful and even prestigious, was one of the two major predictors of a successful HL maintenance.

The differential prestige of languages also constitutes the main reason for HL loss in the United States and other largely monolingual societies (Fillmore, 1991; 2000). In addition to the societal “push to English,” Tse (2001b) noted the existence and impacts of a “powerful pull of English.” The strong emphasis on English in this country has a powerful influence on language attitudes. Crawford (2008) warned that “children soon get the message: Their mother tongue has low prestige in this country and so do its speakers. No wonder most of them shift to English as soon as they can” (p. 26). To reverse the

language shift, Fishman (1991; 2001) and others (García, 2002; Kagan, 2005; Polinsky, 2008; Valdés, 2001; 2005) have suggested that HLs be approached as resources and liabilities rather than as barriers to success in the United States.

However, in the time of globalization, the widespread usage of a few global languages, such as English or Chinese, tend to belittle the importance of smaller and more regional languages, such as Czech or Slovak. Today, the importance and power of English is recognized worldwide. There are more than 500 million English speakers around the world, and it is the most widely studied second language worldwide (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). English has also become the language of business, diplomacy (as the official language of the United Nations), and even science and technology, with the top journals as well as most international journals publishing in English (Rong & Preissle, 2009). Therefore, central European HLs are vulnerable not only because they are of little use and value in the United States as compared to English, but also because they do not represent prestigious languages on the global scale.

Ethnic identity, race, and heritage languages. The last condition affecting HL retention to be discussed here is the ethnic and racial identity of immigrant families and their children. Many scholars have claimed that language constitutes an important feature of one's ethnic identity and, in reverse, that a strong sense of an ethnic identity positively affects HL. Matute-Bianchi (1986) found in an ethnographic study of Mexican-American children, that HL maintenance and the resulting bilingualism were related to a strong Mexican identity. Similarly, Lee (2002) concluded that that HL proficiency among Korean young adults was related to their bicultural identification. Finally, Tse (2001a) considered a sense of an ethnic identity to be one of the vital factors of HL maintenance.

It is important to note that most of these conclusions were based on research with individuals connected to an ethnic community, raising the question of whether an ethnic identity can be nurtured and developed for second-generation immigrants living outside these ethnic networks. Otcu (2010), for

example, argued that Turkish language is the primary means to construct a Turkish cultural identity in the United States. These results are based on a study about immigrant children in Turkish language school in New York City. Similarly, Park (2008) focused on the issues of unequal power relationship between Korean and English, and studied the HL maintenance and ethnic identity struggle of students in a Korean weekend school. Park's (2008) findings suggest that the prestige or the power of the HL impacts the students' self-identification. However, it is possible that a presence of an ethnic community plays a large role in ethnic self-identification of individuals. It is unclear whether strong ethnic belonging may be developed in individuals who are disconnected from a community.

Focusing on European-origin immigrants, Alba (1990) argued that the concept of *ethnicity* based on a specific country of origin is beginning to "fade away." Instead, he suggested, a new category of ethnicity has developed in the United States, one based on having ancestors from *anywhere* on the European continent. This shift may be a result of the growing racial diversity on the United States. In the past, the differences between immigrants from southern and Eastern Europe versus immigrants from northern and Western Europe were perceived as large based on their culture, language and religion. Today, however, the ever-increasing immigrant diversity brings to light issues of race and thus may be overshadowing some of the differences between distinct groups of European-origin immigrants. This shift in focus from ethnicity to race as a predominant social marker may depict European immigrants as a more or less homogeneous group (based on their race) and put their differences in language and culture behind.

In addition, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found that children of European immigrants "Americanize" faster than other racial groups, in that they consider themselves "Americans" more often than children from other backgrounds. Children of immigrants from Latin America and Asia consider

themselves more often as hyphenated Americans (Asian-American, Mexican-American) than the White groups. Thus, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) seem to suggest that while being of European origin might facilitate an acceptance into the American mainstream, it might also lead to a faster erasure of ethnicity, including knowledge of the HL.

Although ethnicity may be tied to HL maintenance, race also plays an important role, perhaps overshadowing ethnicity. Racism has been prevalent in the American society and its institutions in the past as well as today (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Bailey (2000), for example, described this relationship between race, ethnicity, and language in a case study of a Dominican American's negotiation of his ethnic and racial identities. Often considered in racial terms as "Black" or "African American" by his peers, this student used Spanish language to resist the hegemonic social categorization in order to claim his "Hispanic" or "Spanish" identity. In this case, he was trying to disassociate himself from a disadvantaged racial minority. The question remains whether European-origin immigrants would feel the need to disassociate themselves from the White majority through the use of the HL. Although some minorities may be empowered by maintaining their HLs and identities, a rapid assimilation might help White immigrants offset the impacts of xenophobia. However, research on this aspect of HL and identity is largely missing.

Whiteness is associated with privilege, while color is linked to disadvantage in the United States. Critical race theory has called attention to the permanence of racism and the concept of Whiteness as a property, among other issues. DeCuir and Dixson (2004) argued that, "racist hierarchical structures govern all political, economic, and social domains. Such structures allocate the privileging of Whites and the subsequent Othering of people of color in all arenas, including education" (p. 27). The importance of race as a social marker in this society may be one of the reasons European-origin immigrants tend to Americanize faster than other groups. They may be not only more readily accepted into the mainstream;

they may also aspire to associate themselves with the White mainstream precisely because of the available privileges. The prevalence of race in the United States may be one of the reasons ethnicity among the White populations is fading away (Alba, 1990) and with it the knowledge of the various HLs.

HL maintenance and loss are affected by a variety of factors, the most important being the size and regional dispersal of the ethnic group and the resulting access to ethnic networks, resources, and ethnic language schools, parents sharing the same HL and using it at home, and the prestige of the language. This dissertation explores experiences of current central European immigrants from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, an understudied immigrant group that typically does not benefit from ethnic community resources or institutional support in their effort to maintain their HL. In addition, White immigrants today not only Americanize faster than other groups, they are also more likely to live in mixed marriages, which further lessens the likelihood of HL retention of their children (Jensen, 2001).

Czech and Slovak Language Speakers in the United States

The history of the United States has seen four distinct waves of voluntary immigration, in addition to the import of Africans, who were brought to the United States involuntarily as slaves before 1808. The first voluntary wave of immigrants (1790-1820) consisted mostly of British citizens and Protestants, while the second wave (around 1850s) included mainly Irish and German peoples of Catholic belief. The third wave (1880-1914) brought foreigners from southern and Eastern Europe, including a large number of Jewish immigrants from the region. This was the most important period of massive immigration from central and Eastern Europe. Most immigrants at that time came to the United States from the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy and included Moravians, Bohemians, Slovaks, and Hungarians, but also Poles, Albanians, Belorussians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Croats, Georgians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Macedonians, Romanians, Russians, Serbs, and Ukrainians (Daniels, 2002; Roucek, 1969).

Then, between 1924 and 1965, the National Origins Act in effect regulated immigration and maintained the country's "ethnic balance." It favored immigrants from northwestern Europe while suppressing the numbers of newcomers from other parts of the world, including those from eastern and southern Europe. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 eliminated these national origin quotas and opened the door for the current, fourth wave of immigration. As a consequence of the quota removal, this "new immigration" is unprecedented in its volume but also in its diversity of color, language, religion, cultural origins, class, and educational attainment. These most recent immigrants come mainly from Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean, but also from Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East (Rong & Preissle, 2009). Thus, a second sizeable influx of immigration from central and Eastern Europe is currently under way. Between 1987 and 2001 alone, the number of immigrants from Eastern Europe admitted for legal permanent residency in the United States increased six times: from 18,260 to 121,083 a year, with immigrants coming mainly from Poland, Russia, and Ukraine. The total number of immigrants from Europe in the United States grew from 1.256 million in 1995 to 4.27 million in 2006 (Robila, 2010).

There are several reasons for the increased influx from Eastern Europe in addition to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. First, the collapse of the Soviet Union and of the communist regimes in central and Eastern Europe in 1989 opened borders of these countries and facilitated emigration from this region. Second, economic reasons during the 1990s contributed to emigration from central and Eastern Europe. During the first years of the transition to democracy, these countries experienced increased unemployment rates and high inflation. The high wage differentials between the east and west and the employment opportunities available in Western Europe and North America attracted migrants from Eastern Europe (Robila, 2010). Finally, the various wars in the Balkans during 1990s also resulted in a steady flow of immigrants from the region to the United States and elsewhere.

Czech and Slovak Languages, Geography, and History. There are 12 million Czech speakers worldwide, about 10.5 million in the Czech Republic and 1.5 million abroad (Hrouda, 2010). The number of Slovak speakers is estimated at 5.7 to 7 million. Among those, 4.9 million currently live in Slovakia, constituting about 85% of the country's population. Up to 10% of the population of Slovakia today speak Hungarian, a consequence of the historical oppression by Hungary (European Commission, 2012).

Czech and Slovak languages belong to the west Slavic language group, together with Polish. Out of the three, Czech and Slovak are the closest language relatives. Other language subgroups include east Slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian, or Belarusian), and south Slavic languages (Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnian, or Montenegrin; Janda & Townsend, 2002).

In addition to the strong linguistic affinity between Czech and Slovak languages, speakers of these languages are tied by a common history. For three fourths of a century, from 1918 till 1993, Czech Republic and Slovakia constituted a single country, Czechoslovakia. During this time, both Czech and Slovak were official languages of the country and both were fairly equally represented in the public media, allowing Czechs and Slovaks to acquire at least a passive knowledge of each other's language (Janda & Townsend, 2002). As a result, persons born in former Czechoslovakia and exposed to both languages early in life, which is the case for all the participants in this study, are likely to understand both Czech and Slovak easily. In 1993 the federal Czechoslovak government agreed to a peaceful split between the two nations and present-day Czech Republic and Slovakia were born.

There are three major regions within the Czech Republic, each using a different dialect of the Czech language. The largest one, Bohemia, lies in the west, borders Germany and Austria, and is home to the capital city Prague. Moravia in the east borders Austria and Slovakia. And finally, Silesia in the northeast of the country borders Poland and Slovakia. In addition, a number of less pronounced dialects exist in the Czech Republic. Slovak language also has three major dialects: western, central, and eastern.

The capital city Bratislava lies in the western part. Slovakia borders The Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, and Austria. For a map see Figure 2.

Figure 2. Map of the Czech Republic and Slovakia



Source: Infoplease, Map: Slovakia <http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/country/slovakia.html>

Although Czech and Slovak have become official languages relatively recently, in 1918 with the birth of Czechoslovakia, the languages themselves date far back into history. The people of Moravia (current day Czech Republic) were the first Slavs to achieve literacy in their own language when two Byzantine missionaries translated liturgical texts from Latin into “Old Church Slavonic” and brought them to Moravia in 862 AD. Old Church Slavonic was a language comprehensible to all Slavs at the time and used only in a spoken form prior to 863 AD (Janda & Townsend, 2002). Distinct Slavic languages developed from this old language branch later. The beginnings of the Czech language can be dated to the early 15th century when Czech alphabet was established by a Czech theologian Jan Hus, a university professor in Prague. The alphabet introduced diacritical marks (such as ě, š, č, ř, ž, ý, á, í, or é) to be differentiated from Latin and to match each sound of the language to a discrete letter (such as š to match the sound for what would be spelled as “sh” in English). Slovak language has only developed into a separate written form from the Czech language in the 18th century (Janda & Townsend, 2002).

Throughout their history, the Czech and Slovak people have struggled to maintain and develop their languages against assimilatory efforts of neighboring powerful empires. In the medieval times, when the region was under Frankish control, Latin was widely used and enforced in the area. Later on, Czech language had to stand up against German influences, and Slovak language against Hungarian oppression. From the 16th century to 1918, Czechs were dominated by the Hapsburg (later Austro-Hungarian) monarchy and pressured to use German. The Slovak nation was under a Hungarian rule from 11th century until 1918. The 19th century witnessed a national revival movement across many nations oppressed by the Austro-Hungarian empire. This nation-building effort eventually led to the foundation of Czechoslovakia (and other nation states in the area) at the end of WWI in 1918 and to the establishment of Czech and Slovak as official languages of an independent country. Still, attempts to replace Czech with German were made during WWII with the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. At that time, Czech universities were forced to close and all instruction took place in German. Finally, between 1948 and 1989, with the political dominance of the Soviet Union, Russian became the compulsory second language for all children in Czech and Slovak public schools (Janda & Townsend, 2002). Both Czechs and Slovaks have experienced language oppression throughout their history and many of the people from these regions found their social and language freedom through emigration. In fact, the democratic republic of Czechoslovakia was established in 1918 with the help of the nation-building efforts of many Czech and Slovak communities in the United States and the first Czechoslovak president, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, married an American woman, Charlotte Garrigue.

Language practices of Czechs and Slovaks in the United States: Past and present. Immigration of ethnic Czechs and Slovaks has been documented far into the history of the United States. The first significant wave of Czech colonists, called Moravian Brethren, began arriving in the 1730s, and settled mostly in Savannah GA, founded Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Lititz in Pennsylvania, and later spread to

other places such as Ohio. One of these early Moravian settlements can be found also in Winston-Salem, NC. Here they founded a school for girls in 1772, now a liberal arts college and academy. Moravian Brethren were followers of the teachings of a Czech religious reformer and martyr Jan Hus, the same person who had established the Czech alphabet. Moravian Brethren came to seek religious freedom when Czech lands were under the control of the Catholic Hapsburg monarchy (Kovtun, 2009). Only sporadic accounts exist about individual Slovak-speaking immigrants of this time. Although the first mention of both Czech and Slovak immigrants falls into the 17th century, it was not until a the second half of 19th century when large numbers of Czechs and Slovaks began arriving in the United States (Fedor, 2010; Hrouda, 2011).

Large immigration in the past (1860-1918). In the second half of the 19th century two major factors drove large numbers of Czech and Slovak peasants abroad. First, it was the political and religious persecution in the Austro-Hungarian empire, and second, a substantive poverty in the region, mainly because of crop failures in Bohemia, and overpopulation and unemployment in the Slovak region (Ference, 1993). Immigrants of this time came to the United States to seek better economic conditions as well as political and religious freedom (Cope, 2010). Between the two ethnic groups, most Czechs came to the United States with the intention to stay here permanently, while the majority of Slovaks came with the purpose to earn enough money to buy land in their home country upon returning. Although many Slovaks did return, they often chose to re-emigrate and settle in the United States because of the better economic conditions here (Ference, 1993).

It is estimated that over 350,000 Czechs came to America between the years 1848 and 1914, constituting one sixteenth of the Czech nation (Ference 1993; Hrouda, 2011). The numbers of Slovak immigrants during the same period are even higher, estimated at 650,000 during the 40 years from 1874 to 1914, comprising whole one fifth of the Slovak nation (Ference, 1993). A more humble estimate

reported 500,000 Slovak immigrants between 1880s and 1914 (Alexander, n.d.; Fedor, 2010). It is impossible to determine the exact numbers of Czech or Slovak immigrants prior to 1910 because U.S. immigration officials did not keep separate records for each ethnic group within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Some ethnic Czechs may have been filed as Austrians, and Slovaks as Hungarians (Alexander, n.d.). In 1920, according to Gibson and Jung (2006), 228,738 foreign-born people spoke Czech as their first language and 274,948 spoke Slovak.

Czech immigrants of the time were generally more highly skilled, literate, and wealthier upon arrival than Slovaks (FERENCE, 1993). They populated major cities such as Baltimore, MD, Chicago, IL, Cleveland, OH, or New York City. Other Czech immigrants settled in rural areas with rich soil, such as Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin (Hroudá, 2011). In contrast, the “largely agrarian, uneducated, and nationally unaware Slovaks” (FERENCE, 1993, p. 131) supplied the needed unskilled labor for major industries in the large cities of the northeast. More than half of Slovak immigrants settled in Pennsylvania, other popular destinations included Cleveland, Chicago, New York City, and New Jersey (Alexander, n.d.).

During this large-scale immigration period, newcomers typically settled in neighborhoods where their co-nationals had already concentrated, forming communities across the United States (FERENCE, 1993). Czech and Slovak cultural organizations and workers’ unions were founded, numerous newspapers published, and several Czech schools opened. A major Czech cultural organization, *Slovanská lipa* (Slavic linden), was founded in Detroit in 1857 and soon thereafter most of the large Czech settlements had their own cultural center (Kovtun, 2010). In 1890, the *First Catholic Slovak Union of America (Jednota)* was founded in Cleveland, OH. Soon after, a multi-regional, nondenominational association of Slovaks in the United States, the *National Slovak Society (Narodný slovenský spolok)*, was founded in Pittsburgh, PA, and it is still active today (Fedor, 2010). Other associations of this time

included the Czech and Slovak Gymnastic Union “Sokol,” various workmen’s clubs (to uphold the interests of workers in large cities), and numerous local unions and heritage societies, such as by Czechs in Texas and Nebraska or by Slovaks in Pennsylvania (Fedor, 2010; Kovtun, 2010).

Czech and Slovak language was maintained through active use in the communities, through print, and by language schools. The first Czech school opened in New York City in 1856, followed shortly by a Czech school in Chicago, and Texas (Cope, 2010; Kovtun, 2009). More Czech language schools opened in cities with large Czech populations such as Nebraska and Wisconsin (Hrouda, 2011). The first Slovak school in America was established in 1883 in Illinois (Fedor, 2010).

The turn of the century was an era of major growth of the Czech and Slovak communities in the United States. Cultural organizations and journalism contributed to the nation-building efforts of Czechs and Slovaks overseas. In 1915 the leaders of the *Czech National Alliance* and the *Slovak League of America* signed the *Cleveland Agreement*, in which they pledged to cooperate in order to build an independent state for Czechs and Slovaks, Czechoslovakia, a democratic republic in which Slovakia would have its own administration, legislature, and courts (Fedor, 2010; Kovtun, 2010). Eventually, the Czechoslovak independence after WWI was declared from the United States, from Philadelphia, PA.

Decline in immigration during 20th century (1920-1989). After WWI the numbers of Czech and Slovak immigrants decreased dramatically, and the influx of newcomers from the region remained low for the rest of the 20th century. The sudden drop was a result of two separate events. First, the Czechs and Slovaks gained their own independent country for the first time in history and thus the political, cultural, and language rights of the citizens were recognized and upheld at last. Second, the National Origins Act of 1924 set low quotas for immigrants from Eastern Europe as a reaction to the large-scale immigration from this region at the turn of the century. From 1929 to 1965, only 2874 persons from Czechoslovakia were allowed to immigrate per year. However, it is likely that the actual numbers were

higher as additional immigrants entered in nonquota categories, such as family members of U.S. citizens (Alexander, n.d.). Because of the restrictions, the total numbers of Czech and Slovak speakers in the United States began declining after the 1920s, as shown in table 2. The trend reversed only recently, with the fall of the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia in 1989. This pattern of decreased immigration is similar for most central and eastern European countries, as implied in table 2 (All Slavic Languages).

Table 2. Czech and Slovak language speakers among foreign-born population in the U.S.

	Czech Language	Slovak Language	All Slavic Languages
1910	228,738	166,474	1,690,703
1920	234,564	274,948	2,255,798
1930	201,138	240,196	1,992,533
1940	159,64	171,58	1,671,540
1950	x	x	X
1960	91,633	124,943	1,300,342
1970	70,564	82,429	918,652
1980	35,147	24,159	626,668
1990	27,739	16,459	663,45
2000	31,051	15,301	1,377,095
2007	55,382	32,227	2,078,000

Source: Gibson and Jung (2006); U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 (Language Use)

Slavic language speakers in Table 2 include speakers of Polish, Czech, and Slovak, but also Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnian, or Montenegrin. However, it is important to note that the numbers do not include immigrants from at least two major eastern European countries, Romania and Hungary, because Romanian is a Romance language, and Hungarian is a Finno-Ugric/Uralic language. Therefore, the total numbers of immigrants from Eastern Europe are much larger than shown in the table, reaching 4.27 million in 2006 (Robila, 2010).

Although the immigration from Czechoslovakia remained low for most of the 20th century, two noticeable waves did occur as a consequence of political events of the time. The first wave was triggered by the German occupation of Czechoslovakia during WWII and by the postwar takeover of Czechoslovakia by the communist party. The second wave of Czech and Slovak immigration was fueled

by the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 in response to the cultural and political liberalization movement, also referred to as the Prague Spring. This wave was also enabled by the cancellation of the quota system in the U.S. law. Immigrants of these two smaller waves were mostly political figures and intelligentsia fleeing persecution of the totalitarian regimes (Fedor, 2010).

During the 20th century still new Czech and Slovak organizations were established in the United States. In contrast to earlier organizations, which focused more on the needs of the Czech and Slovak communities in the United States, these new organizations were founded mostly to gather support for the cause of Czechoslovakia, oppressed first by the Nazi Germany, and later by the Soviet Union. In 1938, as a reaction to the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, *Czech National Alliance* was reactivated and a *Slovak National Alliance* was established in the United States. In 1940 *Czechoslovak National Council* was formed to support the democratic Czechoslovak government in exile in London, UK. Upon the communist takeover of the Czechoslovak government and the suppression of democracy in 1948, former members of the Czechoslovak parliament came to the United States as political refugees and established the *Council of Free Czechoslovakia* in Washington, D.C. (Kovtun, 2010).

With the sharp decrease in the numbers of Czech and Slovak immigrants over the 20th century, the previously established communities began disappearing. With fewer new Czech and Slovak native speakers coming to the United States to revitalize the language in the communities, language attrition and loss became prominent (Dutkova-Cope, 2006). In addition, unlike earlier immigrants, newcomers of the second half of the 20th century generally did not seek to join their ethnic groups (Fedor, 2010). As a result, the Czech language remained in active use only in a few Midwestern states and major cities with a sufficient influx of immigrants. Many Czech and Slovak heritage societies retained only the identification with the culture, not necessarily the use of the languages (Hrouda, 2011).

Current Immigration from the Czech Republic and Slovakia (1989-present). After the so-called *Velvet Revolution* and the fall of communism in 1989, the borders opened and allowed emigration from the democratic Czechoslovakia. The main reason for emigration from Czech Republic and Slovakia was no longer political persecution but rather economic conditions, such as unemployment, brought about by the large-scale restructuring of the economy, and the wage differential between the west and the post-communist countries (Robila, 2010). In recent years many young and highly educated people from both the Czech Republic and Slovakia came to the United States to study, to work, or simply to travel. Many of these temporary visitors settled in the United States.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the numbers of Czech and Slovak speakers among the foreign-born population of the United States began to grow since the year 2000. There were 27,739 Czech-speaking immigrants in 1990, then 31,051 in 2000, and finally 55,382 between 2006 and 2008. Slovak-speaking immigrant population grew even faster: from 16,459 in 1990 to 32,227 between 2006 and 2008 (Gibson & Jung, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). It is interesting to note that the total number of Czech and Slovak speakers among foreign-born population is much smaller than the overall number of persons in the United States who claim Czech or Slovak ancestry. 872,714 people identified with Czech heritage in 2010, 469,456 with Slovak heritage, and another 198,504 claimed Czechoslovak ancestry. These numbers only reflect one's ethnic identification, not a familiarity with the language. While a large number of people may trace their roots to the Czech Republic and Slovakia, only about 20% of them speak the language today. Still, with their growing numbers, the Internet, and other virtual resources, there might be enough potential for these minorities to reclaim their linguistic heritage.

Between 2006 and 2008 the states with the highest populations of people with Czech ancestry were Texas, Illinois, Nebraska, California, and Minnesota. After Nebraska, the states with the largest percentage of people with Czech ancestry were North and South Dakota (2.2%). The most Czech

language speakers today live in Texas, California, Illinois, Florida, and New York. The largest populations with Slovak heritage can be found in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and most Slovak speakers currently live in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Illinois (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). For details see table 3.

Table 3. Populations speaking Czech (CZ) and Slovak (SK) language and claiming ethnic heritage

	CZ speakers	SK speakers	CZ heritage	SK heritage	Czechoslovak heritage
California	5 563	2 363	45 886	15 940	29 061
Florida	4 145	2 223	26 129	20 251	18 075
Illinois	5 162	3 057	70 366	26 761	20 578
Michigan	1 326	866	22 580	18 121	14 849
Minnesota	2 084	274	45 086	4 327	11 587
Nebraska	2 498	29	54 280	535	7 831
New Jersey	1 633	4 294	12 588	28 986	12 978
New York	3 999	3 097	23 955	24 377	21 457
Ohio	1 473	2 533	35 256	100 310	18 270
Pennsylvania	804	4 508	20 558	160 822	21 189
Texas	8 748	702	110 299	6 563	26 148
Washington	1 172	473	14 615	3 310	6 877

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

The states listed above have been the most popular destinations, however, speakers of both Czech and Slovak language are dispersed throughout the United States so that some Czech or Slovak speakers can be found in each state today (for more detailed information, refer to Appendix 1). This geographical dispersion is tied to the reasons for immigration. Today many immigrants come for a specific high-skilled job or to attend a particular university and their primary goal is not necessarily to join an established ethnic community. Besides, there are no communities in nontraditional destinations, such as North Carolina, where fewer than 900 Czech and fewer than 500 Slovak speakers live today.

Czech and Slovak language classes are currently offered in a number of locations in the United States: some through colleges and universities, others through communities and heritage societies. Hrouda (2011) reported that 17 universities offered Czech classes for college students in 2009. The same database (Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, 2011) listed a total of 29 colleges and universities to offer Czech language classes in 2012. Most such programs are in Texas, California, and

Massachusetts. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a traditional destination for Czech immigrants, a program in Czech has been offered for over a hundred years. Only four colleges offer courses in Slovak language: one in Cleveland, OH, two in Pennsylvania, and one in Ithaca, NY. However, most of these college programs are aimed at adult population and offered as foreign language classes, not always tailored to the needs of HL learners. Classes for children and heritage learners of all ages are only available through Czech and Slovak community organizations and societies.

A few cultural organizations arrange festive celebrations, monthly meetings, Czech classes, and seasonal picnics. Slovak language classes are fewer and typically offered at a language school together with the Czech language. No exhaustive list exists that would document Czech and Slovak HL classes, not even on the websites of the Czech and Slovak embassies. According to Hrouda (2011) from the *Alliance for Advancement of Heritage Languages*, community-based classes in Czech are offered in Midwestern states (Iowa, Nebraska, and Wisconsin) and in states with large Czech heritage populations (Texas, Illinois, and New York). Through an Internet search I was able to locate additional language schools providing Czech and Slovak classes. Offering language lessons for different age and proficiency groups, they typically meet once a week for about an hour or two. Schools offering both languages are located in Philadelphia, D.C. area, and Baltimore, MD. Czech classes are to be found also in San Diego, CA, San Francisco, CA, NYC, Atlanta, Ga, and Glendale Heights, IL. Slovak classes are offered in Cleveland, OH. Only two of the institutions offer day care for young children in the HL. The *Czech and Slovak School* in Portland, OR, serves children 6 weeks to 6 years of age and is open daily between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. The *Czech School West Coast* in Orange Country, CA, has opened a preschool for 3- to 5-year-olds for one day a week 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in February 2013. Generally, there seems to be an increase in Czech and Slovak language class offerings on the community level in recent years. Most of these schools are only in operation the last five years or less, others have advertised a prolonged class time or expansion in terms

of locations and age levels recently. For a list of schools and contact information see Appendix 2. While this recent development in Czech and Slovak language instruction is hopeful, its potential depends on the answers to at least two major questions: (a) whether these language efforts might spread into more diverse locations; and (b) whether they might attract the interest of the large numbers of people claiming Czech and Slovak descent, people with a very limited or no exposure to the language.

With so many Czech and Slovak speakers in the United States today living outside the traditional destinations, language lessons offered by individuals throughout the United States, typically in a one-on-one setting, constitute an alternative to language. These tutors are typically native Czech and Slovak speakers, not necessarily certified to teach the language. However, only adults typically take these classes. There are also a number of Czech, Slovak or Czechoslovak “meet-up” groups around the world, formed by people who wish to have an opportunity to practice the language or simply meet others and reconnect to their cultural heritage. This is an informal way to get in touch with Czechs and Slovaks in a specific area. Of the current 22 meet-up groups in the United States, most are located on the east or the west coast, one of them also in Raleigh, NC (Czech language meet-up groups; Slovak language meet-up groups). Each group will typically welcome both Czechs and Slovaks.

Focusing mainly on new immigrant groups from Latin America and Asia, current educational research has neglected the growing population of the less visible eastern European immigrants. The scarce available research focuses mostly on descriptive demographics (Robila, 2007; 2010) or the immigrants’ parenting experiences in general (Nesteruk 2009; 2010; Nesteruk, Marks, & Garrison, 2009). Educational, sociological, and sociolinguistic studies on any eastern European ethnic group are largely missing. This dissertation begins to fill this gap, targeting specifically Czechs and Slovaks in the southeastern United States, a region without a strong tradition of Czech and Slovak immigration.

Theoretical Framework

The review of literature illustrated the conditions and contexts contributing to HL retention and loss among children of immigrants. However, I argue that the existing research is situated within the assimilation framework, not allowing researchers to approach and to understand the fullness and complexity of the immigrants' experience. My study problematizes the existing discussion by applying different theoretical lens to the study of HL maintenance and loss, the transnational migration theories.

HL shift and attrition among immigrants is believed to happen as a result of the strong societal pressures for cultural and linguistic assimilation. The differential power between cultural and linguistic groups, or more specifically the linguistic hegemony of English, is believed to be the major cause for HL loss (Suarez, 2002; Tse, 2001b). Successful HL maintenance, on the other hand, is usually explained by numerous efforts of immigrant families and communities to resist the English-only pressure. HL use at home and the presence of a strong ethnic community and a language school are among the chief factors to facilitate HL learning (Fishman, 1966; 1991). To lessen the assimilatory pressures and to promote and support HL maintenance, scholars have outlined a number of desired changes in school instruction and in education policies (Cummins, 1986/2001; Gibson, 1995; Valdés, 2001). The strategies for reversing the language shift are generally based in a theory of additive acculturation (Gibson, 1995), claiming that children's linguistic abilities should be considered resources for their education, not barriers to their academic achievement. However, a significant change is still, decades later, more of a dream of these scholars than a reality in today's schools and education policies.

What is changing, however, are the ways in which we understand the immigrant experience. Today, many researchers believe the lives of immigrants are shaped by multiple contexts, rather than

simply by the motivations, pressures, and institutions of the receiving society (Brittain, 2002; 2009; Gibson & Koyama, 2011; Lukose, 2007; Portes, 2003; Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999; Salomone, 2008; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995). Migrants today are believed to lead much more transnational lives: to maintain cross-border ties, to be involved in a number of localities across borders, and to organize their lives with respect to multiple contexts and countries. Transnational migration theories (Brittain, 2002; 2009; Salomone, 2008; Schiller et al., 1995) recognize such multiplicity of immigrant experience and pay attention to their potential involvement in the heritage, dominant, and global context.

Using the framework of transnational migration theories, I explore the ways in which parental motivations, goals, and practices regarding HL maintenance are shaped by the intersection of these three contexts. More specifically, this study examines the potential of parental transnationalism to overcome the strong pressures of the dominant society for language assimilation. This lens provides a more complex picture of the migrants' experiences in going beyond the focus on "now" and "here."

Subtractive Assimilation as a Cause for Language Loss

Throughout U.S. history, each new wave of immigrants has been portrayed in a negative light and expected to assimilate culturally and linguistically into the White-stream. Immigration has traditionally been understood as a one-way process that includes an abrupt break with the past, the "uprooting" of an individual from a sending society with the intention to integrate into the new society (Rong & Preissle, 2009). A classic assimilation model was developed within sociology of migration early in the 20th century (Park & Miller, 1921; Thomas & Znaniecky, 1920) and is still being used today (Alba, 1990; Alba & Nee, 2003). This theory assumes a unilinear, stage-like process of incorporation of an immigrant into the host society and posits that immigrants gradually take on the characteristics and values of the host country and leave behind any loyalties to their sending countries. Most importantly,

the model assumes that cultural and linguistic assimilation of immigrants leads to their upward mobility and success. Therefore, assimilation was often portrayed as “good for the immigrants” and schools have played (and still do) a major role in this process of helping immigrants Americanize as fast as possible. However, there are at least two problems with this theory.

First, the assimilation process today is understood by many as “segmented” (Portes, 1995), leading either to an incorporation into the American middle class or, more typically, to a downward mobility and an incorporation into the lower segments of society. The direction of mobility of today’s immigrants upon their arrival is often not upward. Second, the rapid linguistic and cultural assimilation, theorized as dissonant acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), requires immigrants to leave their heritage behind and embrace the new culture and language instead. This process is subtractive in nature and features many negative effects, not positive, for the immigrants and their families, such as the prominence of HL loss, widening of a gap between the generations, or loss of parental authority.

While sociologists point out the uneven consequences of segmented assimilation as a major problem, it is the subtractive nature of the process of immigrant incorporation into their new society what receives the most critique in educational and linguistic literature. An approach of “additive acculturation” was developed as an alternative way of approaching immigrant populations in schools and society in response and it is discussed below. The concepts of subtractive and additive approach were originally introduced and firmly established in linguistic literature (Baker, 2011; García 2009). Baker (2011) summarizes the processes of additive and subtractive bilingualism as follows:

An additive situation is where the addition of a second language is unlikely to replace or displace the first language or culture. For example, English-speaking North Americans who learn a second language (e.g. French, Spanish) will not lose their English but gain another language and some of its attendant culture. The “value added” benefits may not only be linguistic, but social and economic as well. When the second language and culture are acquired (e.g. immigrants) with pressure to replace or demote the first language, a subtractive form of bilingualism may occur. (p. 71-72)

The consequences of the monolingual and monocultural schooling for immigrants in the United States are best understood through a theory of “subtractive assimilation” as critiqued by Cummins (1986/2001; 2005), Gibson (1988; 1995; 2002), Gibson & Carrasco (2009), and Valenzuela (1999; 2002; 2005). These scholars view schooling as a process of *subtracting* cultural and linguistic resources from immigrant children and *replacing* them with the majority language, culture, and ethos. Instead of adding a new language and culture to their repertoire of skills, their heritage is being devalued and eroded in the process of schooling, which ultimately leads to the students’ disempowerment and educational failure (Cummins, 1986/2001). In addition, the devaluation of parental cultures and languages in schools may force children of immigrants to deny their heritage, resulting in arguments between parents and children, and the loss of parental authority (Gibson, 2002).

Valenzuela (1999) builds upon Cummins and Gibson as she draws closer attention to schools, focusing on the content and organization of curriculum. Based on her ethnographic study of Mexican-origin youth in one high school, she developed a concept of “subtractive schooling” to refer to the ways in which schools help immigrants Americanize by subtracting their unique culture, language, and identity. Her concept connects subtractive assimilation literature with social reproduction literature, pointing out the role schools play in reproduction of social inequalities in society. Valenzuela (2005) sees schooling of Mexican immigrants in the United States as a process of “de-Mexicanization,” or of “subtracting students’ culture and language, which is consequential to their achievement and orientations toward school” (p. 83). Similarly, Sanchez and Kasun (2012) witnessed a strong tendency in teachers across the United States to “assimilate immigrant students by subtracting the non-U.S. parts of their identity” (p. 82). Finally, Spring (2004) examined the actions taken against minority cultures in the United States in the past and provided numerous examples of “the educational process of destroying a people’s culture and replacing it with a new culture” (p. 3), which he called “deculturalization.”

Approaching migrant experience and language learning from the perspective of the dominant society, we find that public schools marginalize ethnic cultures, discourage children from using languages other than English, and that children themselves often strive to be like their American peers (white and monolingual) and may wish to disassociate themselves from their parents. Inevitably, HL loss follows as a logical result of these assumptions. In the theory (and practice) of cultural and linguistic assimilation, neither schools and society nor the children themselves may see reasons for maintaining their unique ethnic traits that differentiate them from the majority.

Additive Acculturation as an Antidote for Language Loss?

Many scholars believe that the promotion of bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism requires an *additive* approach to schooling, as suggested by Cummins (1986/2001), Gibson (1995), and Valenzuela (1999). The additive acculturation approach recognizes the positive effects of ethnic identity maintenance and HL retention and aims to build upon the children's strengths, talents, and resources.

Providing a core argument for additive approach in her 3-year study with Punjabi Sikh immigrants from northwest India in an American public high school, Gibson (1988) showed that preservation of an ethnic identity and culture leads to academic success. She documented that the majority population, including the majority-group parents, students, and teachers, held a strongly assimilationist approach, and believed that the Punjabis needed to give up their Indian ways and to become Americanized. However, the immigrant parents and community put pressure on the children to maintain their cultural distinctiveness and to cultivate their roots within their community. At the same time, parents encouraged their children to accommodate to the *official* rules of the school in order to become competent in the mainstream culture and language but not at the expense of their ethnic identity and culture. Gibson described the strategy of "accommodation and acculturation without

assimilation” as helping students to become successful in U.S. schools and society. However, Gibson (1995) warns that schools place strong pressure on immigrant children “to rebel against their immigrant parents in order to be accepted by their American peers” (p. 91) and she calls for schools to move away from the commonly used subtractive approach to embrace an additive approach that values both cultures and languages. Similar path of adaptation to the host country is described by Portes and Rumbaut (2001) as “selective acculturation,” suggesting that adopting certain characteristics of the dominant society while retaining their cultural heritage and ethnic identification helps immigrant children stay connected to their parents and communities and at the same time succeed in schools.

In Canada, Cummins (1986/2001) studied the role of schools in minority student failure, likewise challenging the approach of subtractive assimilation. He suggested a framework for intervention, one that is still relevant today. “The central tenet of the framework is that students from ‘dominated’ societal groups are ‘empowered’ or ‘disabled’ as a direct result of their interactions with educators in the schools” (Cummins, 1986, p. 21). Cummins (1986/2001) proposed that the “extent to which minority students’ language and culture are incorporated into the school program” (p. 21) is consequential for immigrant student achievement. According to Cummins, the cultural and linguistic specificities of the students in the classroom can be approached in either *additive* or *subtractive* way. The additive approach builds on the resources children bring with them to the classroom and promotes empowerment and achievement while the subtractive approach devalues the children’s culture and disables students in school settings.

Cummins (2005) also noted that the “status differential” between home languages and cultures of immigrants on one hand and English on the other, contributes to the subtractive process. He claimed that in order to become accepted by the majority, “students disengage their identities from their home languages and the process of language loss is accelerated” (p. 586). A major goal of educators, he

suggests, is to communicate a different message to the students about the value of their home language and culture. Cummins (1986) further specifies:

It should be noted that an additive orientation does not require the actual teaching of the minority language. In many cases a minority language class may not be possible for reasons such as low concentration of particular groups of minority students. Educators, however, communicate to students and parents in a variety of ways the extent to which the minority language and culture are valued within the context of the school. Even within a monolingual school context, powerful messages can be communicated to students regarding the validity and advantages of language development. (p. 25-26)

An example of such innovative “multiliteracies pedagogy” is documented by Taylor, Bernhard, Garg, and Cummins (2008) in an example of a Toronto elementary school. Their study examined the possibilities of expanding the traditional monolingual literacy pedagogy to incorporate more than one language as a legitimate “fund of knowledge.” Taylor et al. (2008) show that:

As family and teacher conceptions of literacy were extended beyond traditional monolingual print-based literacy, home literacies associated with complex transnational and trans-generational communities of practice were legitimated through their inclusion within the school curriculum. (p. 269)

Additive acculturation approach brings hope for immigrant children in that their home cultures and languages may no longer be seen as hindrances to educational achievement and success in the United States. While it constitutes a positive move forward to valuing immigrant diversity, additive acculturation approach is mostly just a scholarly theory, not a widespread educational practice. Cummins’ and Gibson’s works were published in 1986 and 1988 respectively but the majority of education policies and practices today still lie within the old assimilationist framework.

Although promising in some ways, the additive approach has one major shortcoming. Ultimately concerned with successful incorporation of immigrants into American society, additive approach is unwilling to account for the possible multiplicity of contexts in which today’s migrants might live or aspire to live. All strands of the additive approach, additive acculturation (Cummins, 1986/2001),

selective acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) and accommodation without assimilation (Gibson, 1988), are theoretically constrained in that they encourage ethnic identity and HL maintenance only as a tool to a successful incorporation to the dominant society. In this view, HLs and cultures are not necessarily seen as valuable or useful in themselves as they constitute simply an aid to the process of adaptation to the host society. The prime focus of these theories lies in the context of the receiving country, and the immigrants' lives are conceptualized and analyzed solely within this context. In order to broaden our understanding of language learning and migration today, I suggest using a theoretical approach of transnational migration, one that accounts for the multiple contexts of migrants' lives.

Transnational Migration Theories

In recent years, transnational theories (Lukose, 2007; Portes, 2003; Portes et al., 1999; Salomone, 2008; Schiller et al., 1995) have developed to question the linear model of immigrant incorporation and to account for the ties immigrants continue to maintain across boundaries upon immigration today. As a consequence of globalization, contemporary migrants are equipped with resources, such as communication and information technologies and affordable transportation that allow them to stay involved in their homeland socially, politically and economically while residing elsewhere, to maintain transnational familial relationships, and to develop unique transnational identities (Salomone, 2008). Brittain (2002) pointedly asserts that transnationalism has been developed "to account for the continued social and physical crossing of boundaries by individuals from different nation-states" (p. 11). In other words, transnational migration theory suggests that today's migrants organize their lives in relation to two or more localities and contexts; that they are involved and continue to belong both "here" and "there." As immigrants continue to be involved in their home country, their children might find ways of tapping into both societies, most likely with the use of the HL.

Using this theoretical framework allows exploring new contexts of migrants' lives and asking new questions about HL use and about the very motivation for HL learning.

The terms *transmigrants* (Schiller et al., 1995) and *American transnationals* (Cervantes-Soon, 2014) have been developed to challenge the established understanding of migrant experience and to allow room for multiple allegiances, belongings, involvements, and frames of reference. Migration today does not have to represent a permanent move and incorporation into the host society may not be a major goal for transnational migrants. As Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) claimed, “for some types of immigrants success is *not* assimilating and growing deep roots in the new land. Rather, ‘success’ is returning home after achieving the goals that motivated them to migrate in the first place” (p. 29). With a prospect for a practical use, HL could become a resource, and migrants and their children themselves might find sufficient motivation to maintain it. In addition, transnationalism brings about new possibilities in terms of availability of resources, such as online classes, electronic media, and Skype communication with friends and family.

The second term, American transnationals (Cervantes-Soon, 2014), has been developed to challenge the deficit view of immigrants in U.S. education research and schooling practice and to move away from the term immigrant. Instead of conceptualizing these children as “immigrants” in need of adaptation to the dominant society, these scholars suggest approaching children of immigrants as American citizens with unique talents, skills, experiences, and resources that are important or even crucial for successful navigation in the globalized world. Sanchez and Kasun (2012) argue that teachers must not ignore the transnational practices and experiences of the children “in order to best educate these students and enrich their more monocultural peers who do not have the same skills—skills they may need—in an increasingly globalized world” (p. 81). They posit that recognizing and crediting the transnational identities and experiences of the children would be beneficial for both the transnational

children as well as the monolingual majority in U.S. schools. As of now, transnational children are reduced to “partial people” (portrayed as ESL learners instead of bilinguals) and forced to hide their non-U.S. identities and lives from their peers and teachers.

Transnationalism originally developed as a theory describing experiences of adult migrants, inevitably raising questions about applicability of this theory to the 2nd generation. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001), for example, claim that “children of immigrants display fewer transnational behaviors and attitudes than many might have predicted” (p. 31). Others (Alba & Nee, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) also suggest that transnationalism among second generation is at least questionable. In addition, some research (Brittain, 2009; Louie, 2006; Rong, 2005; Sánchez, 2007) points out ways in which strong assimilatory forces in the United States counter the efforts of many parents to cultivate transnational social ties and identities in their children. Still, a consensus exists that transnational practices of parents have some effect on their children. Sanchez and Kasun (2012) argue that:

While transnationalism may not be carried out with as much ardor in adulthood, it can play a significant role in the coming of age and adjustment of immigrant children to a new country setting. Transnational experiences can help students develop a sense of identity, which will help them achieve in non-U.S. settings as well as in U.S. school settings. (p. 81)

At the same time, Sanchez and Kasun (2012) report that students today hide their transnational experiences and participation in front of their teachers and peers. The scholars believe that “there would be deeper transnational participation of students if their teachers were able to recognize their transnationalism” (p. 81).

Transnational social space and heritage languages. To facilitate the application of transnational approach, a concept of “transnational social space” was developed as a unit of study, conceptualizing the immigrants’ involvement in multiple locations and the nature of ties spanning national borders. Brittain (2002, p. 16) summed up the major characteristics of a transnational social space:

- 1) Transnational social space is a human collectivity that includes people in different localities and the ties in between, such as grandparents overseas and their grandchildren in the United States.
- 2) The ties are instrumental in nature and involve processes and activities leading to accumulation of economic, social and cultural capital (supplying literacy material, grandparental involvement in childcare, or providing summer school experience overseas in case of HL maintenance).
- 3) Transnational social spaces include both people that are mobile, traveling between localities, and people who are relatively immobile, such as those directly affected by the cross-border exchange of people, goods, information or money.
- 4) The crossing of boundaries is not necessarily a physical one (reading a Czech newspaper or maintaining connections with friends via phone/Skype count as transnational encounters).
- 5) Transnational links can be either formal, such as a membership in a political party, or informal, such as family ties.
- 6) Transnational practices operate in economic, political and cultural-ideological sphere. It is here where questions of power come into play.

The concept of transnational social space has been used in migration research mainly to explore and analyze cross-border ties as a source of social or economic capital (Grim-Feinberg, 2007; Reynolds, 2006; Rong, 2005; Zontini & Reynolds, 2007). Few educational researchers have used the lens of transnationalism in education. Brittain (2002) utilized the concept of transnational social space in the context of schooling to describe the links between the home country and the receiving country in the lives of children. She argued that “the presence of some co-nationals in the school . . . might provide newcomers with opportunities to establish a human collectivity that ‘crosses’ boundaries and to maintain a link between the new locality and the country of origin” (p. 40-41). These links might serve as a resource for the students in their new environment.

In this dissertation, I apply the concept more specifically to HL use, but the overall interpretation is guided by the characteristics listed above. Transnational social spaces are defined here as encounters in which HL is used or encounters in which HL and culture play an important role. An exchange between the heritage language speakers and the native speakers across boundaries happens within a transnational social space. In addition, a linguistic exchange between HL speakers of the same language background may also create a transnational social space. Keeping to the characteristics of transnational social space as described above, such an encounter is *instrumental* in nature in that it is aimed at securing useful capital and resources for HL maintenance. In addition, transnational social space does not have to involve physical crossing of boundaries and thus includes interactions with text or media. More broadly, I explore the ways in which transnational motivations and resources, gained through participation in transnational social spaces, might aid HL maintenance among children of immigrants. In other words, I examine HL practices, goals, and attitudes of immigrant parents to uncover what role do parents' transnational activities play in children's HL fluency and motivations to learn the HL. I assume that HL may become a form of valuable capital within these transnational spaces.

Heritage language as capital? In the assimilatory context of the U.S. education, defined by low institutional support for bilingualism and strong social pressure on immigrants to transition quickly to English-only proficiency, the HLs have little prestige and little use at present. As of today, HLs are still not considered resources in schools and a large number of HLs in schools are usually seen as a burden. Thus, a logical question follows: Are there any good reasons to maintain the HL in the context of the United States if all that is valued is "proper" English? This is when transnational theories come into place, suggesting that the motivation to maintain the HL, as well as the resources needed in this effort, might in fact come from a different context, from *outside* the United States. The concept of *cultural capital* can bring to light the issues of power as they relate to language use in U.S. classrooms and society. Cultural

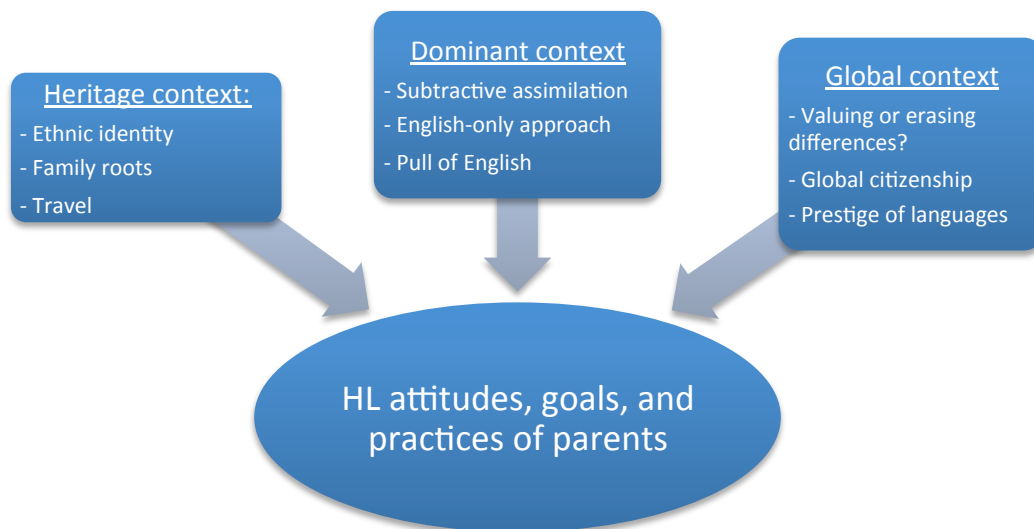
capital, as defined by Bourdieu (1986), refers to the forms of knowledge and skills that are socially valued in the current society and rewarded by the education system. Lareau and Weininger (2003) pointed out that the forms of knowledge recognized as cultural capital are arbitrary and “socially determined” (p. 587). As such, these institutionalized norms and standards are imposed on all students by powerful social groups and favor some children over others. According to Lareau and Weininger (2003), “students and parents differ (...) in their ability to comply with institutionalized standards of evaluation or, put differently, they have different skill levels for managing institutional encounters” (p. 597). The standardized English language use, as opposed to the use of any other language or dialect in schools, can be understood as a form of embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977). This mastery of a language in relation to a specific situation, such as mastering of English in the context of U.S. schooling, can be defined as “linguistic capital” (Bourdieu, 1977). It is important to keep in mind that according to Bourdieu (1977), each situation requires its own “acceptable” language. In other words, it is only when the right language is used in the right context that it constitutes a form of valued capital. In U.S. schools English language represents such positively sanctioned knowledge, while languages other than English seem to have little or no exchange value in the public education “market” (Bourdieu, 1986), unless spoken as foreign languages by native English speakers. Taylor et al. (2008) claimed that “students’ diverse linguistic capital is rarely framed or tapped into as valuable forms of literacy” (p. 270) and that “teachers in schools tend to ignore these rich forms of students’ cultural and linguistic capital, focusing rather on a narrow range of monolingual, monocultural text-based literacies” (ibid, p. 274)

My premise is that the issue facing second-generation immigrants, or transnational Americans of eastern European origin is *not* that they would not have what counts as cultural capital (the English language), but rather that what they do have *in addition* to English does *not* count as capital; that it has no exchange value, no market in the United States. However, while HLs may not be recognized as

cultural capital in U.S. schools, they may be seen as valuable and rewarded in other contexts, such as in another country or in a transnational community. Thus, it may be useful to consider HLs a form of “transcultural capital” (Triandafyllidou, 2009), a capital valued in contexts or localities other than the dominant society, or the United States in this case.

Transnational theory suggests that a number of contexts play a role in immigrants’ lives today. The importance of the dominant context is acknowledged but the heritage context gains a new weight in that it represents ties to another real locality, not only a link to an ambiguous past. In addition, global context may play a role in the parents’ approach to and positioning of the HL for their children. The theoretical framework for analysis of parents’ HL attitudes, goals, and practices is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Theoretical framework



While in the dominant context HL maintenance may be discouraged, it is possible that within a transnational social space HL may become a useful capital, a resource worth procuring. The concept of transnationalism as it relates to HL maintenance is especially relevant to the experience of smaller and/or widely dispersed language minorities lacking a large and active community (Rong, 2005), because it may represent the only way in which these migrants might be able to maintain their HL.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of Czech and Slovak immigrant parents with HL use, maintenance, and loss of their children in the United States. The main objective is to examine the possibilities for reversing the trend of HL loss among immigrants in the time of globalization and transnational migration. With the contribution of the research participants, I would like to envision situations in which the valuable social, cultural, and linguistic resources, skills, and accomplishments of immigrant-origin children are not lost as a side-effect of schooling but are valued and built upon in schools and the larger society.

Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative approach is best suited for a study exploring a “central phenomenon” with the intention to understand and describe what people do and say within local contexts, rather than to generalize and predict (Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston, & St.Pierre, 2007). The experiences of Czech and Slovak immigrants with HL maintenance constitute such central phenomenon to be studied here. To provide a deeper understanding of the situation, a qualitative approach allows researchers to “describe, in rich detail, phenomena as they are situated and embedded in local contexts” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20), or in other words, to generate a “thick description” of what is going on (Geertz, 1973). In addition, qualitative research often aims to understand the phenomenon from the point of the participant; it prioritizes the insider’s, or “emic” perspective (Lincoln, 1993; Patton, 2002). This can be done, for example, by the use of open-ended questions. To gain insight into the life realities of the participants, I carried out in-depth interviews with immigrant parents from the Czech Republic

and Slovakia and with their spouses. Eleven families participated in the study, six with Czech and five with Slovak heritage. Considering the paucity of available data on HL use among central European immigrants, my research is exploratory in nature and, as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) note, exploration and discovery are among the major characteristics of qualitative research.

A variety of research designs exist within the qualitative paradigm, such as grounded theory, narrative research, a number of arts-based approaches, or ethnographic design. To study HL use, maintenance, and loss, I have selected ethnographic interviewing (Spradley, 1979) as the main method of data collection. One of the distinct aspects of ethnography is its focus on behaviors, practices, and beliefs of a “culture-sharing group” (Creswell, 2008), rather than simply on individuals. A “culture-sharing group” can be defined as “two or more individuals who have shared behaviors, beliefs, and language” (Creswell, 2008, p. 480). The Czechs and Slovaks in this study share a similar culture, a common past, and an immigrant experience in the United States. As Creswell (2008) further notes, ethnography is particularly useful when “the study of a group provides understanding of a larger issue” (p. 473). The focus on Czech and Slovak immigrants presents a unique opportunity to study the phenomenon of HL use, maintenance, and loss among children of immigrants in the United States. These groups have not been studied previously, they are among the least likely to retain the HL into the second generation, and finally, my own heritage culture and native language (Czech) allowed my to relate to the participants, gain an “insider” status and elicit personal stories from the participants.

Participant Selection

The selection of participants for qualitative studies is intentional and convenient, rather than random or representative of a certain population. In qualitative research, participants are typically selected using a purposeful sampling strategy in order to provide a rich insight into the phenomenon

under study (Patton 2002). The research participants for this study were drawn from understudied immigrant groups from central Europe, from among Czech and Slovak immigrants. These smaller and less visible groups of immigrants may be expected to face serious challenges in maintaining the HL because of their geographical dispersal and the resulting absence of community-based resources, higher rates of intermarriage, and a missing institutional support for HL learning. Participant families had to meet the following criteria to be included in the study:

1. One or both parents are first-generation immigrants from the Czech Republic or Slovakia (or the former Czechoslovakia) and know the HL.
2. The family has one or more children between ages 3 and 17.
3. The children are U.S.-born (second generation) or they have arrived in the United States at age five or younger (1.5 generation).
4. At least one immigrant parent in each family has lived in the United States for five years or more.

To enlist a sufficient number of suitable families I used a combination of two purposeful sampling strategies. Namely I applied a “snowball sampling” and “maximal variation sampling” (Creswell, 2008). The use of snowball sampling allowed me to build on the networks of the participants and thus locate informants I might not otherwise be able to identify (Lamont & White, 2005). To advertise the study and recruit participants, I posted a recruitment letter on a website of a local Czech and Slovak Language Meet-up group as well as into their listserv, I also placed this letter on a noticeboard in a local Czech restaurant and on its website. For recruitment letter, see Appendix 3. In the recruitment letter I asked potential participants to share the information about the study with their friends. In addition, I used my own contacts and sent the recruitment letter by email to the Czech and Slovak language speakers I knew. A total of 11 families participated in the study.

Maximal variation sampling is used to locate participants with great potential to shed light on the complexity of the problem. Keeping in mind the underlying criteria, I aimed for a diverse sample, including families that arrived more recently as well as families who have resided in the United States longer, ethnically intact as well as mixed-marriage families, families with only one child as well as families with multiple children, families of Czech as well as Slovak heritage, and finally families that use the HL as well as those who have stopped or never used the HL at home. The sample, however, is not very diverse in terms of parental English language knowledge and their socioeconomic status. All families might be considered middle-class and all immigrant parents have a very good command of the English language.

Participant Families

A total of 11 families were included in this study, six with Czech as an HL, and five with Slovak as an HL. In five families both parents were foreign-born and in six families one parent was foreign-born and one U.S.-born. In five of the six mixed-marriage families, the mother was foreign-born and the father was an American. Only in one mixed-marriage family, the mother was an American and the father was an immigrant. All the American spouses were White, spoke English as their native language, and were largely monolingual in English. One husband has learned some Czech over time.

Parents. Most immigrant parents in this study came to the United States after the 1989 fall of communism in Eastern Europe, arriving between the years 1991 and 2004. Only two parents, in different families, came to the United States prior to 1989, fleeing the totalitarian Czechoslovakia. All immigrant parents in this study were the first ones (and with one exception also the only ones) from their families to settle in the United States. They all came knowing no other co-nationals in the area, nor did they join a Czech or Slovak community upon their arrival.

The reasons for their settlement in a non-traditional location within the United States were several. First, some participants came to North Carolina for a specific job, such as working for an international company, or as a postdoc. This was the case for parents in most (four out of five) all-immigrant families. Second, some parents in mixed-marriage families (three out of six) followed their husbands into the location of his job after they had met in Europe. Third, some spouses in mixed-marriage families (two) came to the United States as *au pairs* and happened to meet their future husband here. Finally, the two pre-1989 immigrants had travelled to specific locations to meet the American family that sponsored their immigration.

Some Czech and Slovak participants came to the United States for a shorter visit prior to their immigration: several visited North Carolina on a business trip, two women came originally as *au pairs*, and one came to attend graduate school. None of them planned to join a Czechoslovak community but rather to learn about the United States, to improve their English language skills, or to advance their career. At present, only two families plan to move back overseas. One mixed-marriage family would soon like to move to Slovakia, and one all-Czech family plans to move to a country in Western Europe. The remaining nine families expect to stay in the United States.

The ages of parents, both immigrant and non-immigrant, were between 30 and 50 years of age. All of the participants were White, including the Americans. All families could be described as middle-class homeowners. Education level of the participants was generally high. All but three out of the 16 immigrant parents had earned graduate degrees (MA or PhD). Among the six U.S.-born spouses, three had a graduate degree (one PhD, and two MA). Altogether, the socioeconomic status of the sample was not varied enough. The location of research may have affected the lack of variation in participants' SES.

High English proficiency was common to all foreign-born parents at the time of fieldwork. Most of these adults spoke English well when they entered the United States for the first time. On the other

hand, only one of the six American spouses in this sample was able to communicate in the HL, in this case Czech. All U.S.-born spouses were native English speakers. Thus, in most mixed-marriage families the immigrant parent was fully bilingual while the American spouse mostly monolingual.

At the time of fieldwork, most families reported knowing some Czech and/or Slovak-speaking people in the area. However, fewer knew another family with children in a similar age range that would be suitable for playdates and other joint activities. In five families, parents either did not know any Czech and Slovak speakers in the area or they were unable to locate a single family with children of a similar age and language background. For all families, any Czech and/or Slovak relatives of the immigrant parent lived in Europe.

Children. There were 22 children in this sample. Each family had one or more children in the age range between 4 and 17. In addition, one family also had 26-year-old child and another family had a 2-year-old child. Two children in this study were foreign-born; one came at age 4, the other at age 10, in both cases with parents. All other children were U.S.-born and have always lived in the United States. Most children have visited the Czech Republic or Slovakia several times for shorter or longer visits.

Eight of the families had two children each, a typical number of children in Czech and Slovak culture. Two families only had one child and were not planning or expecting to have any more children. Finally, the only family with more than two children, with four, was the only family in which the mother was American. Most mothers stayed at home with young children, typically starting to send them to preschool for 3 hours at age 3 or 4. Two families opted for an all-day day care and one for the services of live-in *au pairs*. At present, most families send their children to public schools, and two families chose a private elementary and middle school.

The extent of HL use at home and the children's fluency in the HL differed greatly across the participating families. At the time of fieldwork, the reported HL proficiency of the children ranged from

no or minimal understanding and use to cases of native-like HL proficiency. At the same time, most children were clearly dominant in English. Children's proficiency was determined based on parents' description of children's HL use and abilities to understand spoken and written HL. Children's proficiency was not explicitly measured by an instrument because the main focus of this qualitative study was placed on parental experiences with and reflections on children's HL learning and use. Therefore, the term "proficiency" was used as a common-sense classification, not as a strictly measurement term.

Children's approximate degrees of fluency in the HL were defined in this study as 1) fluent; 2) able to use, understand, read and write simple language; 3) able to use, read, or write only a few words or sentences; and 4) not proficient in the HL. All children were more proficient in the spoken form of the language than in the written form; reading was easier for the children than writing. The distinct degrees of fluency across linguistics domains are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Degrees of HL proficiency

	Passive understanding	Speaking	Reading	Writing (& grammar)
Fluent				
Able to use simple language				
Able to use only a few words /sentences				
Not proficient				

In the next section I provide a brief portrait of each family, starting with all-immigrant families, and then introducing the mixed-marriage families. I attempt to highlight the unique aspects of each family. The names of parents are fictional and were selected to reflect each person's ethnicity (Slovak names for Slovaks, Czech names for Czechs, and English names for the Americans). The names of spouses within each family begin with the same letter. Children's names are not used in this study. Basic demographic characteristics of the families, as discussed above, are summarized in table 4.

Table 4. Participant families

		Arrival in the U.S.	Language to kids	Children's age & sex	Children's first language	Children's dominant language	Children's HL understanding and usage
Anděla	CZ	1995*	Mix of CZ and English	11 (F) 6 (F)	CZ	English	Understand simple language, simplified use
Arnošt	CZ	1995*					
Bohdana	SK	2004	SK	7 (M) 4 (M)	SK	Transitioning from SK to English	Understand all, slight difficulty expressing
Blažej	SK	1999					
Diana	SK	2000	SK	9 (M) 5 (M)	SK	Transitioning from SK to English	Understand all, slight difficulty expressing
Dušan	SK	2000					
Helena	CZ	1986	First CZ, now only English	12 (M)	CZ	English	Understands general topic of a conversation, no use
Hynek	CZ	1992					
Jarmila	SK	2001	SK	15 (M)	SK	Fluent in both, English slightly dominant	Understands, speaks, and reads fluently
Juraj	SK	2001					
Klára	CZ	1997	First CZ, now only English	(26, M) 14 (F)	Both CZ and English	English	Understand slow speech, simplified use
Ken	US	N/A	English				
Lucie	CZ	1991*	CZ	10 (F) 8 (F)	English	English	Understand all, slight difficulty expressing
Lance	US	N/A	English				
Milada	SK	1996*	SK	6 (M) 4 (M)	English	English	Understand all, difficulty expressing
Mark	US	N/A	English				
Patrícia	SK	1995	SK, some English	8 (F) (2, F)	Both SK and English	English	Understand most, difficulty expressing
Paul	US	N/A	English				
Radka	CZ	1998	CZ	6 (M) 4 (M)	Both CZ and English	English	Understand all, difficulty expressing
Ron	US	N/A	English				
Stacey	US	N/A	English	17, 14, 11 (M), 6 (F)	English	English	No knowledge of CZ (only a few simple phrases)
Stanislav	CZ	1989					

* First visit to the United States, prior to date of immigration.

Anděla and Arnošt. Anděla and Arnošt are both from the Czech Republic. They came to the United States together for the husband's job, expecting to stay only a few years. The mother found a postdoctoral position at Duke for herself. They have been living in NC about 15 years, and they plan to move overseas, to a western European country, within two years. Anděla and Arnošt cultivate a strong Czech and European cultural identity in the children. Anděla shares about her children: "They are not ashamed of being Europeans; on the contrary they don't consider themselves to be American, because they see that parents are... like proud, and... that simply we think that Europe is better." As a result, the children do not consider America to be their home. Instead, they live with the knowledge that they would be leaving soon. "The younger [daughter]... she often... every day... she says every day, that she wants to move to the Czech Republic... and that she wants to be with her grandmas... like every day. They themselves know that they are not staying here." (Anděla)

When their children (now 11 and 6) were born, the parents didn't place them in an all-day day care but instead worked around their schedules to keep their two jobs while taking turns staying at home with the baby. The parents started speaking Czech to the children, but also read some English books to them and let their children watch TV shows in English in order for them to gain some comprehension of English before entering preschool. The children became almost fluent in English during the two years of a short-day preschool program (3 hours a day). Anděla generally speaks Czech to the children but inserts English words when they seem easier than the Czech ones.

Well, together we speak kind of 'Czenglish,' just like a mix... (...) and with children we speak half and half, but I would say more English and all... because perhaps they... they do not know all the words [in Czech] and... when one is in a hurry or wants to say a lot, then I don't have the time to stop and explain it to them... what the words are... in Czech. (Anděla)

The children respond to the parents sometimes in Czech, sometimes in English, or using a mixture of the two languages. English is the language that is easier for them to use and it is also a

priority of the parents, who see no serious need to teach their children how to read in Czech, let alone the grammar. They do not need literacy skills because the family does not expect to live in the Czech Republic. Instead, the mother believes that the children can get by with English wherever they end up living. Her mother-in-law criticizes Anděla for not having taught the children a better Czech. However, with frequent business trips to the Czech Republic the girls maintain some contact with the language.

Bohdana and Blažej. Blažej is a Slovak who had worked in Canada for several years before finding a job in southeastern United States. He met Bohdana on his visit to Slovakia and brought her along to the United States. They are likely to stay in the United States. Slovak culture, traditions, and language are very important to both parents and they speak only Slovak at home. Although both children (7 and 4) went to a short-day preschool prior to kindergarten, the older son was not fluent in English at the beginning of kindergarten, and qualified for and attended ESL classes. At one point, the parents thought they should perhaps stop speaking Slovak to the children for a while, in order to help them develop their English. "But many people warn us that... that we should... that English comes naturally to the children here... and if we want to maintain Slovak... we should do as much as possible in Slovak... so we try to do it that way." (Bohdana). The younger child had picked up more English at a younger age from his older brother. At present, the boys are beginning to speak English with one another, and the younger son now often addresses even the mother in English.

The boys understand all spoken Slovak, and Bohdana hopes to teach them how to read and write, even including some simple grammar, in the future. For now, however, she believes they need to master English. She wishes for a Slovak language community school where she could enroll the kids. Bohdana meets with other Slovak families in the area, but the children often speak English among themselves during such occasions. The family travels back to Slovakia for a summer every two years, and grandparents come to visit in the United States the other year.

Diana and Dušan. Dušan came to the United States from Slovakia when his employer, an international company, transferred his position across the Atlantic. Diana and Dušan have two sons, 9 and 5 years old. Diana had grand plans in terms of teaching Slovak to her children; she even wanted to open a Slovak language school herself. Over time, she realized it would entail a major commitment for both her and the children. The responsibilities and time demands would not be compatible with her work and other family activities. At the time of fieldwork, she was working two jobs and still found time to be involved in her children's schooling. She arrived to our meeting directly from a morning-long volunteer session in the elementary school, where her older child goes.

Diana had stayed at home with her young children and spoke only Slovak to them. A short-day preschool introduced them to some English so that her older child still qualified for ESL classes the first year of elementary school. Over time, Diana perceives HL learning and maintenance for the children to be much more difficult than she had originally expected. The children are beginning to choose English over Slovak, and they can no longer express themselves easily in Slovak.

Diana still hopes her sons would learn more of the HL in the future. However, she is beginning to see that it will be a decision the children will make themselves. She takes the sons to Slovakia every two years while bringing grandparents to North Carolina for a month or so the other year. Having a full-time job, Diana can only afford to go to Slovakia for two weeks at a time. Still, the children enjoy the trips a lot. "They ask me, even now, 'Why don't we go home this year?' But... you know, like... I have to explain that it's not possible to go home every year... like... I say *home*, right? And they say *to grandma*" (Diana). Holding on to this link to the culture and language, she hopes to be sending her children to Slovakia by themselves for the whole summer in the future. This would provide the boys with both motivation to learn and opportunities to use the language. However, the family will probably stay in the United States and the children identify more with the United States than with Slovakia.

Helena and Hynek. Helena immigrated with her parents just before 1989. Later, while visiting in the Czech Republic, she met her future husband, who agreed to join her in the United States. Their only child was born in the United States and Helena spoke exclusively Czech to him while staying home until he turned 2 years old. At that time, she accepted a full-time job and placed her son in an all-day day care. Soon thereafter, the son stopped talking, as if trying to cope with the sudden change of languages spoken to him. The parents, as well as a Czech-speaking grandmother, who was living near the family at the time, began using English to the child in order to make his accommodation to the day care easier. Since then, Helena and her husband have kept using English with their son. He does not speak any Czech but he understands the topic of conversation in a familiar setting, such as around the house. The family does not visit the Czech Republic regularly, and the boy considers himself an American, according to the parents.

Helena regrets, to a degree, that her son does not understand and use the Czech language, and she takes any and all responsibility. She has also encountered numerous disapproving comments about her approach to the HL from family, friends, and people entirely unrelated to her. Many Czech and Slovak mothers would share with Helena that they use only Czech/Slovak with their own children and that they let school take care of English. Still, Helena sees pitfalls in both approaches: “But then I speak with some of them... and they have problems! And [schools] place the children into ESL classes because they are *behind* [in] English! And I didn’t want it because *I went* to ESL class!” (Helena)

Although she hopes her son might learn Czech one day, her real aspirations are for him to appreciate the differences among people and to grow up into an open-minded adult. “He needs to have a brighter idea [of] what’s going on... around everybody else or the countries around the world! (...) Not just to look one way, because they teach me this... and this is all I’m gonna like zero in on” (Helena). She feels schools can be much more helpful in this respect.

Jarmila and Juraj. Jarmila came to the United States to assume a postdoctoral position in science, and brought both her husband and their 4-year-old son along from Slovakia. Juraj stayed at home with their son for one year, reading some English books to him, taking him to playgrounds to be around English-speaking children, and letting him watch TV in English. Their son entered a public school with some English, but it was in kindergarten where he made the greatest progress in English, while enrolled in ESL classes for 1 year. Jarmila shared the larger picture of their story:

We came here thinking we would only stay for a short time (...) perhaps a year or two... (...) We thought that... when [our son] is small... he could be growing up here (...) ...he can get a solid foundation in English. So when we learned we were staying... we started thinking that he should... he should make some progress in Slovak as well. (Jarmila)

The parents speak mostly Slovak with their son. They also brought books from a Slovak elementary school and began teaching him how to read and write. He is now able to read books in Slovak, and he has even read some Slovak books as a choice of his. Now 15 years old, he speaks fluently in Slovak with any Slovak-speaking people, and is very interested in his Slovak heritage and culture. No other child in the study reaches his fluency in the HL. He is also the only child in the sample to use the HL exclusively with his parents. Jarmila shared about her son's Slovak language proficiency:

He speaks... fluently, but he makes grammar mistakes (...) you know, like in the declensions (...) or sometimes even in the word order... he is using the English word order in his Slovak (...) But it happens very rarely that he would mix up the words (...) or that he wouldn't understand the meaning of a word. (...) and when we go to Slovakia... grandmas have no problem communicating with him, they understand him. (Jarmila)

In addition, Jarmila shared being positively surprised about her son's strong feelings about the language: "Actually... in connection with this interview... I asked him today whether he would teach his own children in the future... if he got married and stayed here (...) whether would he be willing to teach his children... the next generation... Slovak, at least some basics... and he said 'Definitely!' " In addition to English and Slovak, the son has studied Spanish in middle school and German in high school.

Klára and Ken. Klára and Ken are a mixed-marriage couple who met in the Czech Republic when Ken served as a visiting lecturer at a local university. They were married and Klára then moved to the United States with her son from her previous marriage. He was 10 years old at the time, now 26. Klára and Ken have one daughter, born in the United States, now 14 years old. Klára had high hopes in terms of HL and Ken was very supportive of her Czech language efforts. Because Klára's job did not allow her enough vacation, Ken took their daughter to the Czech Republic for the whole summer 6 years in a row, learning some basic Czech himself. He is the one American parent in this sample that can communicate in Czech, to a degree. Klára originally spoke Czech to the children and required them to answer to her in Czech. However, although they understood Czech, they both began using more and more English over time, and eventually refused to respond in Czech. Klára described her experience with her daughter:

It started slowly vanishing and vanishing. And it was hard to *make her* to speak Czech with me because I was the only source. Other than me, there was TV in English, daddy in English, brother in English, all relatives in English... *everything* was English. So I was the only source and... it was impossible to... hold on to it! (Klára)

With time, Klára also began using English, partly because it was easier for her not to switch between the two languages constantly. Today, the family uses almost exclusively English at home although this is the only case where the American spouse is able to use Czech as well.

Klára wanted for both her children to become literate in Czech. Because her son finished four grades of elementary school in the Czech Republic, "his communication [in Czech] is perfect. But when he is writing, he is writing like a fourth grader. He is making such *crazy...crazy* mistakes!" (Klára) Determined to teach her daughter how to read and write in Czech, Klára set up weekly Czech lessons at home. However, pursuing literacy in Czech, in addition to the requirements from school, proved too difficult for both the mother and the daughter, and was given up in several months. The daughter now understands some Czech, when spoken slowly, but speaking is much more difficult for her.

The parents regret their daughter is not more fluent in the HL. Besides missing a community, Ken noted that him being fluent from the beginning would have also helped. However, the parents feel they imparted a sense of a broader understanding of the world to their children: “We raised our children and that was our aim – to be, if I would use the term *cosmopolitans* ...and they are” (Klára).

Lucie and Lance. Born and raised in Slovakia, Lucie had lived in two other European countries as a young adult. She met Lance in Europe and moved to NC, where her husband had a job. She is drawn back home and the family is thinking about moving to Slovakia within several years. Their two daughters (10 and 8 years old) were exposed to both languages from birth, but started first speaking English. It was only during their first trip to Slovakia when they actively used Slovak for the first time. For Lucie, an ESL teacher at a community college, it is very important that her daughters learn Slovak:

Because it's my heritage, it is my home! And... I just also have that... always that open mind that maybe we *will* end up there... or somewhere, so... for me that's *very important* that they are, you know, up to date! I even signed them up... like... *for a school* in Slovakia, like... where they have to be like external students and they have to... take exam every year... (Lucie)

It was the parents' major aspiration to raise the children bilingually. Lance does not speak Slovak but is very supportive of Lucie's efforts. The daughters understand spoken HL without major difficulties, and are able to read simple, age-appropriate texts. Lucie finds it difficult to find time to work on Slovak literacy skills during the school year. She also struggles to use Slovak-only consistently with the girls.

I find... it's hard for me, I have to make myself... and I know it's very important for them (...) that I force myself... just Slovak. Because it's easier to... to... since you speak English all day... just to... [say it in English]. Yeah, and this year I am *really trying hard*, just to... be really consistent. (Lucie)

Lucie takes her daughters to Slovakia every summer for 2 to 3 months, and that is the time they improve the most in all aspects of the language. She is also the only parent to have signed her children up to a public school overseas as distance students. Lucie uses the school materials to teach her children reading and grammar in Slovak. At the end of each grade, the children take a language exam in Slovakia.

Milada and Mark. Milada came to the United States as an *au pair* and later married an American man. Since they both have a full time job, their sons (4 and 6 years old) have gone to a full-day day care from an early age, thus being exposed to a lot of English. Milada is very consistent in speaking Slovak to the children at all times, unless Mark or his relatives are part of the conversation. She also requires the children to address her in Slovak and helps them formulate Slovak sentences when it becomes too difficult for them. “I mean... many times I just say [in Slovak] ‘What did you say?’ and they understand... ..and then they know ‘Okay, I probably should ask in Slovak because [otherwise] I am not gonna get what I want.’ ” (Milada)

The parents’ jobs do not allow for prolonged vacations in Slovakia, but the family typically goes overseas every other year for 2 weeks. In addition, Milada’s father comes to stay with the family every other year for 6 months. He speaks no English, which forces the children to use Slovak. Mark observed: “They want to talk to their grandparents! And if they want to talk to them they have to speak Slovak. So it eliminates the option.” Milada and her father also started reading instruction with the older son.

However, the process was so confusing and frustrating for the child that they soon stopped. She shared:

We are already pushing enough just to [make them] speak and... understand. So... to push *even grammar*, that would be just... I think it would discourage them... and then... I mean, that *might* discourage them, and I just don’t want that. (Milada)

The parents believe it would not be overly difficult for the children to learn Slovak grammar later on if they wanted to. However, they do not see a major reason the children need to know written Slovak. The most important use of the HL is for the communication with grandparents.

Patrícia and Paul. Patrícia met Paul in Slovakia, when his job brought him to Europe temporarily. They married and moved back to the United States and their two daughters are 8 and 2 years old. Patrícia made an effort to speak Slovak with her older daughter, she took her for summer-long trips to Slovakia for 6 years in a row, and she is constantly looking for motivations for her daughter to take

interest in the Slovak culture and language. Patrícia's main goal for her daughters is that they be able to build a relationship with their extended family overseas, which is only possible if they can communicate in Slovak. Patrícia shares:

When one looks at it in a rational way, then I say... well, why would she have to know Slovak [language]? For a survival she does not need it. Why would she, for example, need to see the town I grew up in? ... But your inner need, the emotional need... is for the child to know Slovak, to be able to communicate with grandma and grandpa... (Patrícia)

Patrícia sees that her children will probably never need Slovak for any other purpose, since the family expects to stay in the United States and the older daughter considers herself more American than Slovak. The daughter today understands most spoken Slovak, although she is unfamiliar with some vocabulary. Generally, she uses English in her communication with her mother and it is difficult for her to express herself in Slovak. Her fluency improves during the long summer trips to Slovakia.

Patrícia wishes that her daughter be able to read in Slovak, but she feels there are too many demands made on her daughter from school and that introducing a new spelling system would be too frustrating for the child. Patrícia sighs: "So I ... don't know whether I should mix Slovak into it... in addition to all the things she needs to know to school ...and if it's not easier just to tell her in English and that's it!" At present, Patrícia finds herself using more English with her daughter than originally planned, either in school-related discussions or just because it is easier for all involved.

Radka and Ron. Radka came to the United States as an *au pair* from the Czech Republic and soon married Ron. Radka went to college in the United States and continued on to graduate school. Since her studies were a full-time commitment and Ron had a full time job, they opted for a live-in *au pair* to care for their two children, who are now 6 and 4 years old. To teach the children speak Czech was a major goal of the parents, and for that reason they selected *au pairs* from Slavic language backgrounds. However, only the last one was from the Czech Republic.

Radka always spoke Czech to the children, and expected them to speak the same language with her. She shared: “They respond in Czech, however, many times, English nouns and verbs come to their mind before Czech equivalents, so even though they use Czech sentence structure, a number of words are in English.” At the time of fieldwork, the older child was beginning to insert more English expressions into his “Czech” speech, while the younger had improved because of the time he had spent with the Czech *au pair*. Still, English is a dominant language for both boys. Radka also expects the children to learn how to read and write, as well as to master some basic grammatical rules. She has started working on reading skills with the older son and is determined to continue, although she admits that it is more challenging to make the boy sit down and read in Czech than it is with an English text.

Stacey and Stanislav. Stanislav immigrated from the former Czechoslovakia just before the Velvet revolution of 1989. He came to a southeastern state and married an American woman. Their mixed-marriage family is the only case where the man is an immigrant while the woman is U.S.-born. Stanislav rarely goes back to the Czech Republic, and his four children have never visited the country. Although his wife, Stacey, had enrolled in a Czech language class for one year, neither she nor Stanislav use any Czech at home. Their children do not understand the language at all. When Stanislav’s parents come to the United States to visit, they speak Czech with Stanislav. In order to be able to communicate with their grandchildren, the grandparents learned basics of English. Stanislav admits that at the time the children were born, he was focused on improving his own English skills in order to be successful in his workplace. He spoke English with the children as a way to practice the language. Stanislav does not feel that the children will ever need to know the Czech language, but he is considering taking them for a visit to the Czech Republic.

While the sample is rather uniform in terms parental level of education, English proficiency, and their time spent in the United States, the families’ language stories are quite diverse. The 11 families

feature quite a variety of goals, approaches to the HL, home language practices, and children's proficiencies. There was a significant heterogeneity both within all-immigrant families, as well as within mixed-marriage families. Jarmila and Helena, for example, both only have one child and live in an all-immigrant family. While Jarmila's son is fluent in Slovak, Helena's son can barely understand the topic of conversation in Czech. Among mixed-marriage families, Lucie managed to overcome the challenges to a degree, while Klára gave up her HL maintenance efforts entirely, and Stanislav never intended to teach Czech to his children.

These few contrasting situations show that simply using demographic categories (such as family composition) to predict HL retention could be extremely inadequate. The simple observation of the large variety in HL stories across participants of similar demographic characteristics only confirms that these static variables cannot supply a valid explanation of a complex phenomenon. Still, in literature on HL loss demographic characteristics are often cited as factors, mainly in large-scale quantitative studies. It comes as no surprise, then, that these studies present contradictory findings in terms of the role of parental education or their English proficiency in the children's HL retention. Based on the brief description of this sample it appears clear that other than demographic factors play a major role. In this qualitative study, I take a different approach and attempt to understand the parents' goals, motivations, and practices in a broader context of their immigrant lives.

Methods of Data Collection

Ethnographic interviewing (Spradley, 1979) was used as the primary method of data collection, supplemented by observation and numerous informal conversations. The initial design to interview both parents in each family proved problematic, as many fathers were not able or willing to participate. Therefore I targeted the immigrant parents in the mixed-marriage families, and the mothers in the

families where both parents were immigrants, as they were expected to be the main care givers for the children. However, the spouses were also invited to participate.

In-depth interviews. Among the five all-immigrant families, I interviewed four mothers and one couple. Among the six mixed-marriage families, I interviewed two mothers and four couples. The differential roles of the fathers are described in the following chapters.

At the beginning of each interview, I briefly introduced myself and provided brief information about the study. Since I have known a number of these families for years the interviews could proceed quickly to the core issues in HL use, maintenance, and loss, as we did not need extra time to build trust between the participants and researcher. With some families I had been meeting from time to time in the past, with others I have perhaps only met two to three times before. In addition, my previous contact with these participants helped tremendously in order to place their stories, answers, and comments into a larger context of their lives.

About half of the participant families, I have not met before. In these cases, I spent the initial phase of the interview gathering some background information about the family and the children, as well as sharing some of my stories to build a trusting relationship. Generally, because of the shared language and culture, all participants were extremely willing to share their stories and generous in terms of the time they allowed for the interviews. In addition, some parents had emailed or called days after the interview to add some more details or relate other stories they remembered and wanted to share.

All interviews were audio-recorded, lasted anywhere between ninety minutes and almost three hours, and they took place typically in the participants' homes. Three families opted for a more neutral place, such as a quiet coffee shop or a picnic area outdoors. Participants had the option to choose the language of the interviews: Czech, Slovak, or English. A total of four interviews were conducted mostly in English, three mostly in Czech, and four mostly in Slovak. The four mixed-marriage couples chose to use

English for the husband to understand. Generally, however, all parents used both their HL and English in the interview to a degree. This “code-switching” (Baker, 2011; García, 2009) between the languages was another option, and they used it quite frequently.

Using “f4” transcription software, I transcribed the interviews myself as soon as possible in order to make additional notes and comments, to become more familiar with the data, and to begin the initial analysis and the coding process. The interviews were transcribed in the language(s) in which they were carried out, and the language use (code-switching) of parents was considered as additional data for my study. I analyzed the data in the original languages, and made comments and notes about the interviews in English. For the purposes of this dissertation, I translated the quotations that appear in this text from Czech and Slovak into English.

Follow-up interviews and more. Depending on the richness of the data I have gathered during this first long interview and on the themes emerging from the preliminary analysis, I have invited four parents to participate in a follow-up interview in order to ask additional questions or to elaborate on a theme they mentioned earlier. The nature of this second interview was generally more informal, lasting up to two hours. One was audio-recorded, and others were recorded through extensive field notes. With other parents, I have used email or phone communication to clarify certain details and to ask additional brief questions. Any informal conversations and unanticipated discussions with the participants, such as before and after the interview but also at other times, are also be used as a form of data. Because of the incidental nature of these encounters, these data were recorded in the form of field-notes, not as audio-recordings.

Socio-demographic survey. Each family in the study was asked to fill out a survey asking specific socio-demographic questions, such as age and education level of the participants, number of children, or their language use and preference (Appendix 4).

Field notes and observation. A research journal played an important part in the data gathering process. I recorded observational field notes during the interviews or immediately after the visit to supplement the data from the interviews. I took notes based on my observation of the family dynamics, of their language use amongst themselves, about their mood and energy with which they shared their stories. At a number of times I also observed their interaction with children, which served as a form of triangulation of the data. In particular, I took note of the linguistic interactions among all the family members, including the communication between parents and children and between siblings. These observations took place simultaneously with the interviews as well as directly before and after the interviews. In some cases, I had the chance to see the family dynamics multiple times before and during the data collection period, as well as during the final analysis and writing. The research journal served not only for recording field notes but also as the first place to note an idea, an emerging theme, a possible new topic to explore, and preliminary analysis.

Research Questions

Exploring the central phenomenon of HL use, maintenance, and loss among children of immigrants, the two main research questions were: “What are the experiences of Czech and Slovak immigrant parents in the United States with HL use, maintenance, and loss of their children?” and “As perceived by parents, what socialization practices and larger societal conditions contribute to or interrupt their children’s heritage language maintenance?” The first question explores the family-related use of the HL, parental goals, as well as the attitudes, and practices of parents related to HL maintenance. The second question focuses on the challenges and possibilities as it explores the parents’ perceptions of the larger societal conditions as affecting the HL maintenance effort in a positive or a negative light.

These two overarching questions provided a general guidance for my research but they were not asked during the interviews (Creswell, 2008). Instead, I developed an interview protocol with 10 broad sub-questions to be used directly in the interviews. All of these sub-questions are open-ended and exploratory in nature to allow participants to take the lead and talk about issues particularly relevant to their life. In addition, I used “probes” (Creswell, 2008), asking participants to elaborate on their answers or to clarify some points. Probes are context-related sub-questions that emerge during the interviewing process and allow the researcher to obtain additional information. These additional questions may ask parents things such as “Please tell me more about your experience reading Czech books to your child” or “Would you describe how you felt when that happened?”

Qualitative research is a dynamic process, also described as an “emerging design” (Creswell, 2008), indicating that the questions asked as well as the purpose of the study may change during the process of inquiry. I attempted to follow the lead of the participants in order to learn the most about the studied phenomenon from them, rather than imposing my own experience and background (personal or theoretical) on them. Flexibility is one of the advantages of qualitative research as it allows researcher to trace the important questions as they emerge (Patton, 2002).

Methods of Data Analysis

The objective of an analysis in ethnographic qualitative research is to identify themes common across participants while paying attention to the ways in which the situation of each one may be unique. I analyzed data from all the interviews and field notes with respect to the two main research questions with the intent to more fully describe the phenomenon of HL use, maintenance, and loss among Czech and Slovak immigrants. I used a qualitative software program *Atlas.ti 7* for the several stages of analysis in order to locate common themes across families.

First, I conducted an initial analysis of the data, simultaneously with transcription of the interviews, identifying initial codes and writing memos. Codes are short labels used to identify a topic, or to summarize a meaning of a segment of text in the data (Creswell, 2008). I paid attention to recurring themes, experiences, and concepts in each interview. The objective of coding is to develop a sense of the data and to identify important ideas or sections of text. Assigning initial codes to segments of text helped me to orient myself in the transcripts as well as to build a base of codes for further analysis. These initial codes had to be specific enough to allow for combining and regrouping in the next stage of analysis. Memos are short notes, ideas, and concepts that emerge from this first exploratory analysis of the data. These helped me to keep specific details about a family in mind during analysis, for example.

The next stage consisted of creating a list of codes and locating redundancies or overlaps in the ways codes are assigned to text. Similar codes, or codes found to be too specific, were grouped together under a higher-level code. The purpose of this process is to arrive at a manageable number of codes that would provide a description of the situation in more depth. Finally, through another process of analyzing codes, I have identified major overarching themes common across participants. These themes serve as the main story lines for Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Finally, I offer an interpretation of the data. I discuss the major overarching themes with respect to previous findings and established theories of linguistic assimilation and HL loss, using the framework of transnational migration theories. Keeping in mind that qualitative research is interpretive in nature (Patton, 2002), my results provide *one* interpretation, rather than *the only possible* interpretation of the data. My identity, in terms of my personal and professional background, as well as my theoretical approach, certainly impacts the whole research process and is discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.

Reciprocity and Ethics

In qualitative research, when participants allow the researcher to enter their lives and use their time, issues of reciprocity become important. A qualitative researcher should consider how to “give back” to the informants who enabled the study to happen in the first place (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In reward for sharing their time and experience, I offered each participating family a \$25 gift certificate to a Czech restaurant in the area. In addition, I believe that most participants truly enjoyed the opportunity to talk about their lives, their heritage, and their experiences as immigrants. Participation in the study may have helped some parents reflect upon the challenges they face and to arrive at a deeper and more critical understanding of their lives.

Ethics in ethnography is a very complex issue. Goodall (2000), for example, raises questions such as whether it is ethical to take someone’s stories to advance one’s own career. Other issues of ethics include being aware that one’s research may have unexpected and unforeseen consequences for the participants (Goodall, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). What if the research process might inflict an argument between the parents? What if a new understanding of a participant’s situation results in a dispute with teachers or other authorities? During the interviews I was aware that with entering a site, the researcher also changes it to a degree. I made every effort not to disrupt the atmosphere within the studied families and to be sensitive to the possible after-effects of my research.

To address the issues of ethics in this study I provided the participants with sufficient and accurate information about the study and protected their anonymity. I provided a brief description of the research, explained the methods used, conveyed the number and length of the interviews. Parents were informed that their anonymity would be protected (through the use of pseudonyms), that their participation in the study was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. They signed and received a copy of an Informed Consent form (Appendix 5).

Positionality

Within qualitative research, the so called “crisis of representation” is widely acknowledged, suggesting that researcher is not an objective reporter of an objective reality but rather he or she has a voice, expressing a specific understanding of a phenomenon, one among many others (Creswell, 2008). This non-neutrality of the researcher brings along the obligation to be reflexive and aware of one’s own position in the research process and data interpretation. Holstein and Gubrium (1997) argued that all interviewing is an “interpretively active” and “meaning-making” occasion. In other words, one does not *receive* knowledge or *record* or data through interviews. Rather, the data are constructed by the very process of interviewing, as a response to the use of a specific research instrument. Because of the collaborative nature of interviewing, it is important to acknowledge the input of the researcher into the data. As Creswell (2008) noted, “reflexivity in ethnography refers to the researcher being aware of and openly discussing his or her role in the study in a way that honors and respects the site and participants” (p. 485). My heritage culture, experiences, and values influenced the research process from the very beginning and became an inseparable part of the inquiry. The very selection of the research problem, for example, was influenced by my experience as an immigrant mother aspiring to raise bilingual children and the population I set out to study matches my own cultural background.

Goodall (2000) makes a distinction between three types of “positioning” (p. 132) that influence the way in which a researcher sees, understands, analyzes, and finally represents data. Goodall (2000) suggests that one should specifically consider “fixed positions” that include mainly age, gender, class, nationality, and race; “subjective positions” created by life history and personal experiences, and finally “textual positions,” referring to the language choices researchers make to represent what they see, and to the ways in which they place themselves in the text in relation to the participants and their stories (Goodall, 2000, p. 132-134).

As for my fixed positions, I am an immigrant mother of three children. I grew up in Prague, Czech Republic, and moved to southeastern United States upon marrying a U.S. citizen. While originally planning to stay only for five years in the United States and then move back to the Czech Republic with my husband and children, it has now been almost 10 years and our plans to move are still rather vague. My American experience has broadened my horizons in some interesting ways. Most importantly, I have become more proficient in English over the years. This newly gained skill presents itself in most unexpected ways: I began writing my shopping lists in English, I count things (and children) in English, and I even think in English at times. This linguistic transformation has all a lot to do with my husband, with whom I converse in English. However, he had set out on a journey of learning the Czech language and had managed to memorize all declensions and conjugations, including some tricky exceptions. Still, it takes a lot of time and effort for us to communicate in Czech and it involves confusion and multiple misunderstandings on both sides. It also elicits a good amount of laughter, though.

A lesson I learned in the United States is that people seem to have a “race,” and that I seem to belong to the ‘White’ or ‘Caucasian’ group. While I was certainly aware that people of other colors lived in the world, my major surprise was that what color people were still *mattered*. Even more so, that it mattered so much in a country considered by many the great multicultural land of immigrants. While adults seem to focus on the skin color first and foremost, it is interesting to see that for my children the skin color of their friends is less important of a descriptor than the color of their eyes or their height.

To provide a simple description of my “subjective positions” may prove much more complicated. However, the very interest in the topic of HL use, maintenance, and loss flows primarily from my personal experience. As a Czech immigrant mother, married to a mostly monolingual Hawaiian-born American, I experience both the struggles and the delights of HL maintenance with my U.S.-born children on a daily basis. Naturally, I am quite curious about the experiences of other people. My

cultural proximity to the participants proved both helpful and challenging during the process of data collection and analysis. While such an experience might enhance my understanding of the data, I had to make a conscious effort not to read my own experience into the participants' stories.

All my children (5, 6, and 8 years old) were born in the United States and they have lived here ever since. My hope is that they consider their Czech heritage something special, that they would not feel shy to tell their friends about that. A number of times I was most positively surprised. One example was when some of my children's friends at school somehow gathered that the Czech Republic was a "cool place to go," when my child's teacher figured out on her own how to change keyboards in order to make the right diacritical mark in my child's Czech name, when another teacher invited me to write down a greeting in the Czech language on the board in their classroom, and finally, when my son informed me that he was teaching his school friends Czech.

Perhaps most importantly, I have hopes that my children would be able to speak Czech. I use the language with them often but not all the time. While my oldest son had used Czech with me (and often with everyone else as well) until about age 3, I do not recall the other children speaking in Czech to me much at all. While they would use some Czech with their grandparents and with my friends in Prague, they only use English when they speak with me, even when we are visiting in Prague for the summer. Still, I am hoping that they would become more fluent, perhaps with age. It is often difficult for me to keep the motivation going when I do not see any progress and when I am the only person using the HL in the family. I find that I have to have hope and a major reason to pursue this goal. Otherwise, the sense of futility would be overwhelming. Therefore, this dissertation serves as a stimulus for me personally to go on, and not to give up. All my three children have dual citizenship and they are signed up in a Czech elementary school overseas. Last year, at the end of his second grade, my oldest son passed a Czech language exam in Prague, which mostly involved reading and some basic grammar.

Another recent personal experience has shaped my interest in HL maintenance and loss in the children of immigrants. For two years I served as an instructor of Czech at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While this course was designed as foreign language instruction, assuming students come to this class with no previous knowledge of the language, I encountered students with a variety of language skills and needs. One student, for example, was born in the United States to a Czech mother and came to class already familiar with some aspects of the language, mainly with its spoken form. Early in life he was able to speak the language quite effortlessly, but by the time he enrolled in college much has been forgotten. Another student was married to a Czech immigrant and was therefore familiar with certain phrases and motivated to learn mainly the spoken language. Yet another student had no family ties to the language but his interest was shaped by his academic pursuits. He needed to acquire excellent reading and writing skills in order to access academic literature produced in Czech for purposes of his own graduate research. Not only did the students' proficiency in the language vary, but the students were familiar with different aspects of the language and therefore in need of different kinds of instruction. The foreign language approach worked for some but it was quite inappropriate for the students who had some experience speaking Czech. Czech grammar, for example, needed to be introduced in a different way for the heritage speakers and for the foreign language learners. Making efforts to meet the needs of all students in this class inspired my research in important ways.

As for my professional background and positioning I need to consider my previous academic training in sociology and public policy. As a result of this background, I tend to explore the social dimensions of language retention and loss in immigrants through a sociological lens and theory. In addition, my educational experiences in three different countries (Czech Republic, Finland, and the United States) broadened my understanding of the difficulties language-minority students face in the traditional institutions, such as schools, of the mainstream society.

Chapter 4: Parental Motivations for Heritage Language Maintenance

Considering that all parents in the sample speak English well, that Czech and Slovak community in the area is basically non-existent, that any HL-speaking extended family resides overseas, and that Czech and Slovak are languages of small countries, perhaps inconsequential on the global scale, what goals for HL maintenance do these parents hold and what motivations drive their efforts? Why do they decide (or not) to teach their children the HL? Do they anticipate their children to use the HL in the United States or elsewhere? What does the language symbolize to the parents? How do parents make their decisions about language use at home? What factors influence their motivation for or against HL maintenance? Do they focus on the HL at all cost or choose to assist their children with the transition to English? How much effort do they put into HL transmission and maintenance for their children? What are their expectations? Do they strive to achieve bilingualism for their children?

Most parents in the study cared very deeply about the HL, both in mixed marriages and traditional immigrant families. Parents in eight out of 11 families made strong efforts to maintain the language. Among the most active were Lucie and Lance. To the question of “How important is it to you that your children know Slovak?” they answered:

Lucie: *Very important.*

Lance: Yeah, very important.

Lucie: Because it's my heritage, it is my home! And... I just also have that... always that open mind that maybe we *will* end up there (...) so... for me that's *very important* that they are, you know, up to date! I even signed them up... like... *for a school* in Slovakia, like... where they have to be like external students and they have to... take exam every year.

Lance: Even though I am the English-speaking parent, it's still *very important to me* that they know Slovak... you know? And they know! Oh yeah, yeah! I mean I often tell them... to speak in Slovak... 'Poslovensky!'

Although no other family went as far as to sign their children up to a school overseas, the immigrant mothers in the other seven families also assigned a high importance to the HL. Mark, who is an American man married to a Slovak woman, explained:

I mean... It's pretty important. [The children] should be able to talk to their grandparents. You know... it's not *just* about the culture. It's about family. [And] it's a limitation... to only speak one language. And... trust me... I know! (Mark)

Most immigrant parents as well as their American spouses hoped that their children would master at least the spoken form of the HL, and often even some degree of literacy. While some parents expected the children to be able to read in the HL, they generally did not anticipate the children would gain any knowledge of the Czech or Slovak grammar, which would allow them to spell and write in the language properly. Milada explained why she decided not to focus on grammar: "I think reading would be fine. Grammar... I don't expect them to know, for sure... and... I don't think that... unless they would move to Slovakia, they would ever really need to... need to know that."

As for the remaining three families, two all-immigrant families in the sample represented a much more ambivalent approach to the HL, and one mixed-marriage family chose not to use the HL at home at all. These three families had one or both parents of Czech origin. Anděla and Arnošt wanted their children to understand and value their Czech roots but they consciously decided to focus more on English. High level of proficiency in Czech was not a major goal in this family and the parents used a mix of Czech and English at home with the children. Anděla expects the girls to be able to communicate in Czech but has no aspirations in terms of grammar or correct spelling. When asked about her goals and expectations about her daughters' writing or grammar knowledge in Czech, Aděla explained:

No, not that, not at all... Because... because I think that we will never live there, and they will not either, I suppose... of course I don't know it for sure. But even if they did live there, then what... a lot of foreigners [who don't read and write in Czech] live there (...) so no. Else it would be far too much [work] in addition to what they already have [to do to school]. And I still think... it is only Czech. Not any kind of world language or something, you know? And like... they know it,

like I know that if they did live there, they would speak just fine, and it does not bother me that they cannot write much or something, because a lot of foreigners live there (...) and how many Czechs cannot write properly... (Aděla)

Helena and Hynek constitute a very specific case. Helena spoke Czech to her son in the beginning but when he entered day care at age 2, both parents switched entirely into English in order to ease the transition for the child. This practice of speaking English with the son remained till today but Helena regrets the loss of the HL. Her first comment on the HL usage in the family was: "I regret I... wasn't [tougher]... in that I would keep speaking Czech to him." Later in the interview, Helena confessed "I would like a change for him." She meant she would like to see her son learn Czech in the future.

Finally, Stanislav, who married Stacey after he immigrated into the United States, explained that at the time their children were born, he was mainly focusing on improving his own English skills. He needed to improve English in order to successfully run his business to be able to provide for his family. He simply began speaking English to the children and the practice has remained ever since. This family was the only case where no HL was ever spoken to the children; it was also the only case where the mother was American and the father an immigrant.

No striking differences in goals were found between the parents in all-immigrant versus the mixed-marriage families. It may be a coincidence that the three families with highest goals were Slovak, while the three most ambivalent families were all Czech. For differences across families see table 5.

Table 5. Parental goals for HL maintenance

	<i>Parental goals regarding HL proficiency of children</i>
Stanislav	None.
Anděla, Helena*	Fluency in spoken HL.
Patrícia*, Klára*, Diana*, Milada*, Radka**	Fluency in spoken HL + ability to read.
Bohdana**, Jarmila, Lucie	Fluency in spoken HL + ability to read + ability to write.

* Parents lowered their expectations over time.

** Parents postponed expectations into the future.

Considering that there was no formal support structure for the HL in place and that the task would fall on the parents and perhaps their extended family overseas, the HL expectations in eight families were quite high. However, it is important to note that the goals of parents do not necessarily correspond to the children's actual HL proficiency. In fact, these are the *initial* dreams parents had for their children. As will be pointed out later, many parents lowered their expectations for children's fluency and literacy skills over time. Perhaps the most distinctive case was Helena's, who basically gave up the hope that she would ever teach her son any Czech. Similarly, three mothers in mixed-marriage families – Klára, Patrícia, and Milada – now realize that their children would not be able to read well in the HL, and even the fluency in the spoken language is uncertain, unless they spend long periods of time overseas. Even Diana, from an all-immigrant family has abandoned her dream of starting a language school and teaching her children to read and write in Slovak. Two other mothers with relatively younger children, Radka and Bohdana, are at present postponing the literacy goals into the future. Only Jarmila and Lucie have managed to follow through on their goals for the children. Thus, while parents in eight families originally hoped for HL literacy skills in the children, only two families have reached some meaningful levels of literacy.

This chapter focuses on parental goals, values, and motivations for HL maintenance. Three major types of motivation were driving parental efforts: 1) HL for communication with extended family overseas, 2) HL as a major piece of cultural heritage and ethnic identity, and 3) academic, cognitive, and social benefits of HL maintenance. Radka touched upon most of the motivations in a single statement:

We would like our children to be able to talk to their grandparents and other Czech relatives, and understand the culture of their ancestors. I do believe it is important for them to define who they are and where they came from. Speaking more than one language helps the children better understand the world in general and it also opens more opportunities. (Radka)

Motivation #1: Communication in Transnational Social Spaces

The primary reason for HL maintenance, put forth by parents in nine families was the children's ability to communicate in the HL: with grandparents and the extended family, as well as with general public when visiting overseas. However, preserving HL as a means of communication with people of the same linguistic background within the United States constituted a motivation only in one family.

Transnational social space is defined as human collectivity, connected with ties that are instrumental in nature, and crossing boundaries, although not always in a physical sense (Brittain, 2002). Language is an essential tool to be used within these spaces in order to communicate with and obtain resources from family and friends abroad. Thus, transnational social spaces not only provide opportunities to use the HL, they may constitute one of the core motivations for HL maintenance.

Communication with extended family. Research literature highlighted the importance of HL for communication between children and parents, for the maintenance of parental authority, and the wellbeing of the family in general (Carreon et al., 2005; Kouritzin, 1999; Portes & Hao, 2002). Contrary to these findings, only one parent in this study asserted that HL was important for the interaction between herself as a mother and her child. Jarmila shared: "For me as a mother it is extremely important that he can communicate with me... without difficulties!" No other parent in this sample expressed the same belief, suggesting that most do not experience or expect difficulties or misunderstandings when their children use English. In fact, for many parents in this study it was more practical to use English, especially when they needed to make themselves understood to the children. Klára, Anděla, and Milada all shared experiences similar to Patrícia's:

Many times, I also think in English myself. And sometimes, (...) when I need to actually explain something to her... sometimes I say it in English, but... I generally try to have at least the ordinary conversation in Slovak. (...) But sometimes, I have to admit I talk to her in English.

Contrary to the literature (Carreon et al., 2005; Kouritzin, 1999) claiming that HL loss in children might interrupt communication between parents and children, it was not the case in my study. In fact, the communication *was* interrupted in the exact opposite situation, in cases where parents had insisted that their children used the HL. Klára and many others expressed that their children simply refused to share stories with them in the HL. The only way to maintain a relationship with the child was to let him or her use English (discussed in detail in Chapter 6). Since all parents in this study were proficient in English, they had no difficulties understanding their children. However, had they been not fluent in English, the misunderstandings would ensue rather often because of the poor HL fluency of the children.

Thus, the major motivation for HL maintenance in a majority of these families was to enable communication not between parents and children, but between the children and their grandparents and other extended family. Anděla, for example, shared: “Well, we had a plan for [the children] to know... to be able to make themselves understood with family, you know... because our parents do not speak English.” Similarly, Milada related her major motivation for the maintenance of the Slovak language:

If [the children] just understand and can simply reply to grandparents... that’s probably enough for me. (...) Grammar and writing... just forget it! (...) it’s not like... I think they will *ever* in their future need to use Slovak. I mean, after the grandparents are gone... they won’t really need Slovak. But I think it would allow them to... pick up the other language[s] faster and maybe get them more interested into... speaking other language... (Milada)

Maintaining a meaningful relationship with extended family was a major goal for most parents, and language was the means to achieve this goal. Patrícia explained: “The language thus comes along with the relationship... because if [my daughter] did not know the language she simply wouldn’t be able to communicate with my family.” Grandparents were the most important from the extended family in every case, they were also typically the only relatives from overseas who had visited the family in the United States, often multiple times and for prolonged periods of time. Grandparents generally play a significant role in childrearing in eastern European culture and traditions (Nesteruk & Marks, 2009).

While cultural traditions might offer one explanation for the importance of grandparents, it is also possible to hypothesize about other reasons for why grandparents play such an important role in these families. Since most of the grandparents do not speak English (unlike the parents), HL provides *the only way* for the children to build and maintain any meaningful relationship with them. In fact, as a number of participants noted, the grandparents' general inability to speak or understand English constitutes one of their major assets as it provides a strong incentive for the children to learn and use the language. By contrast, the younger generation of Czechs and Slovaks overseas, such as the children's cousins, peers, or aunts and uncles, is much more likely to have some knowledge of English. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia today, English is the most common foreign language studied in all levels of education. Klára, for example, noted, that her daughter could easily communicate with her teenage friends in the Czech Republic in English. Similarly, Diana recalled that her son's cousins were interested in practicing English with him while the family was visiting in Slovakia. English is increasingly becoming a global language (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010) and its prestige (Fishman, 1991; 2001) goes far beyond the U.S. context.

The general importance of grandparents in HL maintenance suggests that when mutual visits are impossible or when the relationship with grandparents is severed, there is no longer a viable reason for the children to learn and speak the HL, as Milada concisely pointed out above. When grandparents pass away, the major motivation for HL learning will disappear. This link between grandparents and the children's HL use is also documented by Kouritzin (1999) in her book "Face[t]s of heritage language loss." Some of her participants noted that when their grandparents died, their last link to the language was lost. Further supporting these findings, it is important to note that in the two families where grandparents had learned some English (Helena and Stanislav) the children spoke no HL at all. It could be theorized that, in neither case the major incentive for HL learning and use was present.

Heritage language use overseas. Many parents believed the HL to be an essential communication tool for the children when visiting overseas – to do basic shopping, to ask for directions, and to perform other simple types of communication. For that reason, most parents focused on cultivating a working knowledge of the spoken language in the children. Parents in most families made regular annual (or biennial) trips to the Czech Republic or Slovakia with the children. These trips served mostly as a tool for the children's HL maintenance; supplying the children with both the opportunity to use the HL and the motivation to continue their interest in the HL. The only two families who did not make use of these trips were Stanislav's, the mixed-marriage family where no Czech was spoken from the beginning, and Helena's, the all-Czech family where both parents switched entirely to English early on. This finding begins to support the claim that transnational trips and involvement constitute a major motivation (and tool) for HL maintenance. To this point, Helena commented: "I think if [our son] had been going to Czechoslo... to the Czech Republic... like for a visit... but we don't have who to visit there... that he would certainly speak [Czech]." Helena's mother has lived in the United States for a while. Now she resides in Europe but often outside the Czech Republic.

However, HL use overseas as a motivation of HL maintenance had two shortcomings. First, some parents, such as Anděla, believed that even overseas their children could easily get by with a semi-fluent use of spoken Czech and excellent English skills. With the many international corporations working in central Europe, English proficiency is one of the major requirements on the job market in the Czech Republic and Slovakia today. In this case, if the children were to move back, a strong command of English would be a valuable asset while a thorough knowledge of Czech or Slovak may not be necessary. In addition, a large percentage of the Czech and Slovak population now understand English to a degree.

The second issue of this motivation is that, while most parents in the sample made an effort to visit overseas as often as possible and for as long as possible, they realized that in the end their children

are much more likely to live in the United States than to move overseas. Thus, if the children discontinue visiting the parents' native country in the future, which is likely, it eliminates this motivation entirely.

Anděla, for example, noted: "Like if we knew we would be going back, and that [the girls] would perhaps go to school there... then I would likely... I would probably try harder." Another mother, Radka, believed that a solid knowledge of the HL might open more possibilities for her children, but she did not expect them to move to the Czech Republic in the future.

Among the 11 families, only Jarmila and Lucie imagined the family or the child moving overseas. Jarmila thought it possible that her son might move to another country in his life, and for that case she thought it would be helpful for him to know Slovak and other languages well. She stated: "I don't know where life... might take him. And thus I think that... the more languages he would know the easier a move to another country would be for him." In fact, Jarmila later mentioned her son was considering enrolling in college in the Czech Republic. Although his HL is Slovak, he has come to understand both Czech and Slovak, mainly through encountering Czech speakers in the United States and because of the linguistic proximity of the two languages. Lucie hopes to return to Slovakia with the whole family, which is why she signed up her daughters in a Slovak school. Lance, her husband, is supportive of the idea:

Lucie: "I mean I am very drawn... back to Europe. Yeah, my heart is there. Yeah. Because I lived... I mean Slovakia, and then I was in... Germany a year and a half or so, and then in England for several years, so... But yeah, just generally I am drawn back, and I am *drawn home!*"

Lance: "And I am... I am drawn there too. I mean, I like it there a lot, I have never lived there, and... it might... so I can't... tell you what it would be like if *I did live* there. Hopefully I would adjust and be fine... ah, but... I know my kids would adjust (...). And we already have a place there so we could... move into our place... yeah... ...easily, so... it's just the job thing."

In these two cases, the motivation to use HL overseas is stronger because migration represents a real possibility for the children in these families in the eyes of the parents. It appears likely that the strength of this motivation is reflected in the two families' language practices. Jarmila's and Lucie's children are the most literate in the HL in the sample.

Heritage language use in the United States. While communication with grandparents and HL use overseas constituted a strong motivation for HL maintenance in most families, only a few parents could think of a practical use for the HL – or the need thereof – in the context of the United States. Not a single parent imagined, for example, HL as an asset for a future job within the United States. In addition, as mentioned above, only one mother considered it important for their mutual understanding that her child spoke Slovak with her. The same mother, Jarmila, thought her son should know Slovak in order to communicate easily with other Slovaks and Czechs here in the United States. No other participant echoed this sentiment. Most parents implied that any Czech or Slovak immigrant in the United States today would have at least an intermediate knowledge of English, thus eliminating the need for the children to speak the HL here. This belief was based on experience. Whenever a family met with another family of the same linguistic background, the children would speak English among themselves. As Milada noted: “The problem is that all the kids speak English!” She meant that meeting with Czechs and Slovaks in the United States supplies no incentive for the children to actually use the HL. The only exception to this general rule was a situation when the two families were all-immigrant, of the same language, the mothers were staying home with the children, and all the children in the two families were younger than 5 years old. Otherwise, the children would opt to use English among themselves and with other adults.

Since the need to know and the opportunities to use the HL in the United States were almost nonexistent, a number of parents – independently from one another – framed the HL as a “secret language,” a language the siblings or family can use while no one else around would understand. Anděla would often tell her daughters: “When we go out, we can speak Czech and no one knows what we are saying... you don’t even have to whisper (...) you can simply just talk.” And it worked for Anděla. Her daughters would now attempt to answer in Czech when with her mother in public “because they like it that no one knows what we are talking about... so for them it is a kind of secret language” (Anděla).

Lucie did not suggest the idea of a secret language but the girls figured it out by themselves.

They use it when they don't want others to understand them (...) or when they want to show off... sometimes I notice that ...like we are in the carpool with other kids and... when they want to tell me something they don't want other kids to understand (...) I think it's a little show off thing. Maybe. (Lucie)

In other cases, parents hoped this motivation would induce their children to use the HL more in the future. Milada believes that with time her sons might make use of Slovak between themselves:

I am hoping that at some point down the road they would figure out that they would have their... *own* language between two of them... so they would start speaking together, especially if there are friends around and they don't wanna friends to understand... (...) some kind of secret language or something... so they... they'll get more interested into that... you know? (Milada)

The motivation of HL as a secret language demonstrates the parental belief that Czech and Slovak languages are simply not used within the U.S. in that it assumes that no one else but the children would understand the "secret" HL.

Within the Motivation # 1 (communication within transnational spaces), grandparents played the most important role and represented the strongest motivation for HL maintenance as voiced by the parents. The second most important reason to maintain the HL was for the children to "get by" when visiting overseas. Both these motivations involved links with parents' country of origin. On the other hand, HL was not seen as particularly useful as a communication channel in the United States.

Still, even the two most important motivations had shortcomings. First, they demand only a certain degree of fluency in the spoken language, not necessarily a command of reading or writing, leaving the families with little incentive to pursue HL literacy skills firmly with their children. Second, both these types of motivations present a rather temporary reason to study the HL. Firstly, when grandparents pass away the major reason for HL use will disappear, and secondly, according to most parents the children are likely to reside in the United States and discontinue the visits overseas into the future.

Taken together, these motivations provide partial explanation for why some children knew the HL quite well while others knew little or none at all. On one side of the continuum, Helena and Stanislav did not take the children overseas, and their parents learned some English for communication with the children. In both families, the children spoke no HL. In the middle of the spectrum, Milada, Radka, Bohdana, and Diana traveled with the children overseas and visited grandparents who spoke no English. On the opposite side, Jarmila and Lucie both expected their children to actually *need* the HL either in school or at the workplace overseas, which might have contributed to their children's high level of proficiency in the HL. Jarmila was also the only parent who thought it important that her son should be able to communicate in Slovak with herself and other Czechs and Slovaks in the United States.

Motivation #2: Maintenance of Cultural Heritage and Ethnic Identity

In addition to the actual use of the HL, another strong drive for HL maintenance among parents was to pass on the HL as a central piece of their ethnic identity (Lee, 2002; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Otcu, 2010; Tse, 2001a). Almost all immigrant mothers wanted their children to develop an understanding of, and an appreciation for, their cultural heritage and ethnic roots. Patrícia explained her view:

The fact, that one is of Slovak or Czech origin, or German... or something else, it is... really your *identity*, it is – in fact – *you!* You grew up that way, you see yourself that way, and it is simply unchangeable (...). And I really think that – same as any other parent – you try to lead your children to like the things you enjoy. And since I grew up in Slovakia, and I like *halušky*, and *kapustnica* [ethnic food], and sheep cheese, and ...the Slovak national costume, and Slovak dances, and so on... I simply try to teach my child to like these as well.

For most parents, the central piece of an ethnic identity, as well as a tool to further accessing the cultural heritage, was the HL. Anděla explained: “We wanted for them to... that they would enjoy it there [in the Czech Republic], that they would understand the culture, you know, all of that, and part of it is the language.” However, preserving of the ethnic identity had its challenges and pitfalls. Children at times resisted parents' efforts, and generally felt much more “American” than “Czech” or “Slovak.”

Children's resistance. A number of participants mentioned another immigrant family and reported that children in that family had refused speaking the HL in public or even at home because they felt ashamed of their difference. Patrícia noted about one of her Slovak friends:

I know American children [of Slovak origin] who would say... to mom... 'mom, don't speak *Funnish* [funny] to me!' My friend said [that] her son... that he feels like an American, and this odd Slovakia... some weird Slovakia... that he (...) does not want to have anything in common with it. And he is only some three... four years old, you know? (Patrícia)

Similarly, Anděla knows a Russian woman, whose daughter refuses to speak Russian although she knows the language: "I remember that the girl felt terribly shy to speak with her mother in Russian in public! She was entirely ashamed of her mother being from Russia, or from somewhere there, or... and that she was simply an 'American'!" (Anděla) Diana reported about her own son's resistance:

Here... in front of other children, he does not say anything in Slovak, you know, in the face of American children. Like with his brother or his [Slovak] friend... with them he would use Slovak, it's not a problem. (Diana)

Diana believes that this refusal is only temporary:

At a certain age... the children are ashamed of... their parents... (...) ...that the parents speak English with an accent... and they perhaps don't want to speak the [home] language, they feel ashamed... but then comes a different age and the children are *proud* that... that they can speak with their parents [in a language others don't understand]. (Diana)

In my sample, children's resistance to being different was manifested mainly in other ways, not strongly in terms of the language. Juraj and Jarmila shared that their son refused to take ethnic food for lunch to school. He did not want to face questions of other children, and asked his parents to make him "food like other children have..." (Jarmila) The parents then started packing simply a sandwich or a bagel for lunch for him. Ethnic traditions constituted another arena where the children expressed some resistance. Most families followed Czech and Slovak traditions for major holidays, such as Christmas or Easter. This would include setting up the Christmas tree in the morning of December 24 and unwrapping the presents in the evening of December 24, not in the morning of the 25th. In addition, it is believed

that the presents are brought by baby Jesus and not by Santa Claus. Diana shared her experience: “Well, my children ask me ‘Mom, why don’t we have a Christmas tree yet? Why?’ (...) And they think ‘It’s not fair!’ ...or something like that.” Similarly confusion arises with Thanksgiving, which is a specifically American holiday with no tradition overseas. If a family would decide not to celebrate Thanksgiving, the children would feel left out, asking “‘And why don’t we have a turkey?’ ...so we do!” said Diana, allowing the children to feel a sense of belonging with their peers. Most parents did the same. Jarmila explained: “We celebrate Thanksgiving like everyone else, although it is not... for us... the tradition is foreign.”

Children’s ethnic identity. A strongly pronounced refusal of the HL and heritage culture was not a major issue in this sample, perhaps because the parents responded to the children’s need to belong with their American peers instead of dwelling strictly on the heritage culture. Most mothers realized there were limitations as to how much of the heritage can be transmitted to the second generation, the children who lived all their lives in the United States. Diana, a mother in an all-Slovak family, shared:

You know, I would like that... that they would feel like... that their roots are in Slovakia, that they would feel a connection, that they would know where they are coming from. (...) But I see in them that they... simply they are growing up in America! They were born here, they have their friends here (...) and simply they don’t have such a strong relationship [to Slovakia]. (Diana)

Patrícia and Lucie are both married to American men. Patrícia realizes that the heritage will eventually bear much less importance in the lives of the children than it does for the parents, but she still hopes to cultivate some relationship to the culture: “One hopes that... that the child would grow up being a little bit proud of Slovakia. Of course she would be proud of... being an American and stuff.”

Lucie also hopes her daughters would define themselves as Slovak, at least partially:

Lucie: They probably would feel that they are... more American than Slovak, but definitely that identity is there I would say *at least* 30-40%

Lance: ...more American. I always remind them that though.... I have told them... I have told them many times ‘you are half American half Slovak’... yeah. And... and [the older daughter] will likely comment ‘but I am more American’ [Lance laughing]

Lucie: So definitely I think there is some identity... they would probably feel [American]... obviously, since they were all their life mostly here... that they are more American. [Pretending to be sobbing over the fact and then she laughs...]

The strongest shift to an American identity for the children is present in the case of Stanislav, who never used Czech at home and who does not follow Czech traditions with the children. Helena, who switched to English early on but who does follow Czech traditions, also assesses her son's ethnic identification as "definitely American." She observes that her son perceives the ethnic heritage in a very different light than the parents do but she hopes he would retain some sense of uniqueness: "I think he does not have the connection to the Czech Republic... like my husband and I do, naturally... but I think he knows that it is something different than regular mainstream what is around him. You know?" (Helena)

Only in three families parents believed their children identified more as Czechs/Slovaks than Americans. In all three cases, both parents in the family were immigrants of the same ethnic origin, and other specific conditions were present at the same time. Jarmila's son was born in Slovakia and came to the United States when he was only 4 years old, thus having the most exposure to the heritage culture. Bohdana's children were the youngest among the all-immigrant families, thus the family still exercised major cultural and linguistic influence over the children (as opposed to school and peers). And lastly, Anděla and Arnošt consciously focused on building Czech ethnic identity and loyalty for their daughters, mainly because they were quite certain the family would leave the United States, although not necessarily to go back to the Czech Republic. In their case, the loyalty to the Czech Republic and Europe is built in opposition to the American identity, as if they were mutually exclusive. Anděla shared:

We simply always say... 'Czech Republic is better, Europe is better,' you know... and we watch... like... ice-hockey and we cheer for the Czechs (...) so we speak well about it... like about Europe and all (...) and they see this positive relationship we have towards the overseas, so they are like ready to move there... they don't feel ashamed to be Europeans... quite the reverse... they don't think of themselves as Americans because they see that the parents are proud and... that... that simply we think Europe is better.

This contraposition is somewhat unique in my sample but it has served the purpose of preserving the ethnic identity in this family. Even though both girls were born in the United States, Anděla shared with laughter that her younger daughter would often say to her: “Mami, ja se *feeluju*, jak kdybych byla *born* v Česku! [Mom, I feel like I was born in Czech!]” Exactly like this, half in Czech, half in English. It is also interesting to note that in this case the strong focus on ethnic identity was not accompanied by a strong focus on HL proficiency. This finding complicates prior research suggesting that ethnic identity has a positive effect on HL maintenance (Lee, 2002; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Otcu, 2010; Tse, 2001a).

In general, parents wanted to transmit their heritage, including the language, but they often realized that their children were growing up to become much more American than the parents would have wanted or expected, even in all-immigrant families; not having a strong-enough relationship to the parental language and country of origin. In order to cultivate the children’s interest in the heritage, the parents make use of a number of practices (discussed in detail in Chapter 5), including speaking the language at home and taking the children overseas. In this sample of 11 families, only Anděla’s children consider themselves to be Czechs, not Americans. At the same time, some of the parents experience a shift in their own identity and loyalties from the heritage culture to the host society, illustrating that ethnic identity is not a static and unchanging category. Patrícia expressed her identity dilemma:

I belong neither there, nor here! I only belong to people who are in a similar situation as I am... [and] solve similar problems... Here, I am a foreigner, although I look and speak as an American.... And I know different things now [than Slovaks in Slovakia]. (Patrícia)

Similarly, Anděla and Klára both reported they would *not* want to move back to the Czech Republic precisely because they have gotten used to their new home over the years and the transition of going back would be too painful for them.

Motivation #3: Academic, Cognitive, and Social Benefits

Most parents also listed strong motivations for early exposure to the HL that did not necessarily represent a clear link to the heritage culture or communication within the transnational context. Instead, these motivations promoted the HL as a tool to achieving certain other goals in the U.S. context. These motivations include viewing the HL as a door to other languages, as supplying additional cognitive benefits to the children, and as promoting a general appreciation of cultural differences.

Heritage language as a door to other languages. Among these other motivations, the most important reason parents typically mentioned for HL maintenance was that early exposure to the HL would help the children learn other languages in the future. Patrícia shared: “I hope that as I teach [my daughter] this *second language*... that her brain will be prepared to eventually learn another language, perhaps Spanish or French.” Milada also believed that having been exposed to the HL “would allow [the children] to... pick up the other language[s] faster and maybe get [the children] more interested into... speaking other language[s]...” Even Klára, looking back, believes an early exposure to the Czech language has indeed made a difference for her daughter:

I actually think that really the... the attempt of pushing the second language in her brain opened up something in that brain... because you are accessing different parts of the brain, and it usually helps kids to study another language. And she is doing pretty well. (Klára)

Her daughter is now studying Spanish in school but she has forgotten most of the Czech she ever knew. Although “opening door to other languages” might look like a genuine motivation for HL maintenance, it is important to note that in this case the HL constitutes more of an *aid* to learning other, *more useful*, languages, while the goal of HL proficiency recedes into the secondary place. Patrícia, for instance, has now accepted that her daughter might not be able to learn any more Slovak beyond just a simple spoken form but she does expect her to learn other languages. Similarly, Bohdana notes: “So... I will be glad to see them speak the [heritage] language, but I would rather have them learn another

foreign language. Like at school.” And Radka would encourage the children to learn programming as a useful language over putting a major effort into teaching them Czech. In fact, both Patrícia and Klára presented the HL as a *second* language, suggesting the priority of English from the very beginning.

This motivation begins to point out some of the tensions and power relations between languages, as measured on the global scale, where the global languages take precedence over the less-globally important language (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). The language prestige (Fishman, 2001; Tse, 2001b) is thus considered not only with respect to the dominant culture, but also on a global scale. Generally, parents in this study want their children to learn other globally recognized languages in addition to English – and the other languages (of global importance) often take precedence over the HL. Parents in all families wanted their children to learn at least one more “global” language in addition to English. Milada, when asked whether she would expect her children to study other languages in addition to Slovak and English, replied:

Absolutely. Absolutely! If I could... like now, I think the preference is to speak Slovak. But if I would have somebody else... or if we would be in Slovakia (...) and they would be picking up Slovak language... just being there, I would force... I would really... focus on Spanish, I would teach them Spanish rather than Slovak. The only reason I am not doing that right now... is because... when we were talking to a psychol... the children’s psychologists, they said ‘one person should speak one language to them.’ So if I would be mixing Spanish and Slovak at the same time it would be really tough on them, because then they wouldn’t know either of them. So... yeah, if I would speak Slovak and Mark [her husband] would be Spanish, today, and they are picking up.... (...) English as a... as a language of the country, ...that would be okay. But... if I would be switching between Slovak and Spanish, that would be just too confusing to them, apparently. (Milada)

Among the older children in the sample, Klára’s daughter (14 years old) is currently taking Spanish, and Jarmila’s son (15) studied Spanish in middle school and is now taking German classes in high school. Jarmila explained: “I see languages as something that opens further opportunities.” However, Juraj and Jarmila were rather dissatisfied with the foreign language offerings. Juraj noted about the situation in middle school: “Since we didn’t have [any other] choice of the second language...

he just took some Spanish.” Jarmila surveyed the language offerings in high schools in the area and found that “all you have... is Chinese, Japanese, and naturally Latin, and then you have German and French... and then there are many other languages but not even one... Slavic!”

Cognitive benefits. In addition to the linguistic benefits of learning an HL, many parents stressed the cognitive aspect and conveyed that learning another language would help their children become more imaginative and able to approach various tasks in life in more creative ways. Anděla believed that exposure to another language, besides just simply English, helps children develop cognitively, that “their brain simply learns to function differently... that it does not have such a stereotype” (Anděla). She claimed that, the stimuli from two different languages help the children be more creative and more successful in general. Similarly, Lance commented: “we know a little bit about the benefits of... being bilingual and multilingual, and (...) just how they look at the world, and how they categorize things, how they organize.” His wife, Lucie added: “I actually am very unhappy that they don’t have a third language.” Milada, Radka, and others voiced similar views.

Although the cognitive benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism are well founded in the research literature (García, 2009; Lee & Suarez, 2009; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001), this motivation also positions the HL into the role of a *tool* to achieving other goals, putting the actual proficiency in the HL aside. For many parents, the exposure to the HL was framed as cognitively beneficial. However, exposure to a language does not equal – or lead to – a proficiency in the HL. As such, this motivation does not have a major potential for strong HL development in the children.

Appreciation of cultural differences. The last strong motivation for HL maintenance, traced in a number of families, was to sensitize children to cultural differences in general through the use of the HL. Mark put it this way: “Yeah, it’s not just the other languages, it’s understanding that... not everyone is...

the same! Not everyone just speaks English! It's a big deal!" For Helena, it is important to teach her son that there are multiple cultures in the world holding multiple viewpoints:

We just simply try to give [our son] this common sense of understanding... Not just to look one-way, because they teach me this... and this is all I'm gonna like zero in on. But he needs to have a brighter idea what's going on... around everybody else or the countries around the world.
(Helena)

Similar idea was echoed by Klára and Ken:

Ken: "I think the other important thing is... Maybe in the beginning, when we first met, I was sort of the proud American, and ignorant, and she was sort of the proud Czech. And I think now we are much more... we... (...) try to raise our children to just *think*. Not be patriotic, and just... you know... it does not mean that you don't love where you live or whatever, but... to... to think. You know? I think it's really important to both of us."

Klára: "We raised our children and that was our aim: to be, if I would use the term *cosmopolitans* ...and they are. Because my son... was travelling nonstop, and he was travelling not only with us but he was travelling with his father, so he got from both families all those trips that we abroad, and... he got a whole Europe, he got some of Africa, he got... here in America."

Perhaps a result of the exposure to another language and culture, Jarmila and Juraj see that their son (now 15) has "his eyes open, mostly because he is naturally curious" (Jarmila). He does not like it when the American TV criticizes Europe; he demands that the news be balanced, not misleading and not favoring only America. Jarmila explains: "But it's not that he would be a patriot... only loyal to Slovakia. He... he looks at it actually in a much more global way." In general, parents in this study felt they had to do the job of raising awareness about cultural differences for their children, pointing at the assimilatory practices of schools, media, and society in general (Gibson, 1995; Valenzuela, 1999; 2002).

Positioning of the Heritage Language

While the underlying desire of the parents was certainly to maintain the HL for their children, a closer analysis of these motivations revealed some drawbacks and problematic positioning of the HL. It is possible to assume that the parents' beliefs might have implications for their language practices and – in the end – may contribute to the language loss among the children.

Drawing on the types of motivations parents expressed, the overall positioning of the HL can be described as follows: 1) The majority of parents had difficulties envisioning future situations, in which their children would actually need the HL, except for occasional communication with grandparents, who reside overseas. Parents generally don't expect the HL to be of any practical use to the children in the future. 2) Instead, parents frame the HL, perhaps subconsciously, as a sentimental link towards the ethnic heritage and culture, towards the past. 3) Lastly, most parents see the exposure to the HL as a tool to achieving other goals, rather than stressing the objective of HL proficiency in itself. The parents' general positioning of the HL is conceptualized by the following three themes: "Heritage language for practical use?" "Heritage language as a sentimental link to the past," and finally "Heritage language as a tool to other goals."

Heritage language for practical use? For most parents, the only two motivations for HL maintenance that involved the *need* for actual use of the HL were 1) communication with grandparents and 2) HL use during the children's visits overseas. For these purposes, some level of fluency in the spoken language constituted a sufficient proficiency. Other motivations, such as maintenance of ethnic heritage and cultural identity, a door to other languages, cognitive benefits, or appreciation of cultural differences, did not necessarily require or expect HL *usage*, much less any literacy skills in the language. Most parents saw no other practical use for the HL in their children's future lives, unless the children decide to move overseas, which is believed to be highly unlikely in most cases. In fact, most parents perceived HL proficiency as a skill relevant and possibly useful only in the transnational context *outside* the United States. Taking into account that most parents expected their children to live in the United States, investing too much energy into HL maintenance might appear unnecessary. Instead, the parents considered English (and perhaps other global languages) the most important resource for the children's future. English would serve them well here, but also in any other country in the world. Anděla noted:

I think [my children] can use English everywhere, you know? And that they might know Czech perfectly it is *nice*, like in the Czech Republic, but how many people use this language!? Like... it is a priority for me that their English is perfect. (Anděla)

Patrícia, for example, wants her daughter to speak Slovak and to have an understanding of what it means to “be Slovak.” At the same time, she realizes that the language would have no practical use in her daughter’s life. She shared: “Although rationally I think... that for her survival it is not all that important... there is this emotional desire to share something... some aspect of oneself with one’s child.”

Naturally, there were a few exceptions in the sample. Jarmila and Lucie, and partially also Radka, believed their children might need the HL in the future because they might move to the parental country of origin. Even in these families, however, parents put more emphasis on children’s proficiency in English than in the HL. All the other eight families believed that their children would most likely not need or use the HL in the future at all. Instead, English and other global languages are encouraged and expected of the children in the first place. The HL comes in second, as a kind of hobby.

This positioning of HL raises the question, Why are some languages considered a resource and given a preference over others in terms of study time and energy? Parental positioning of the HL points at an imagined hierarchy of languages, in which large global languages, such as English, German, or Spanish, are considered practical in today’s world, and take priority over the small and not necessarily practical languages, such as Czech and Slovak. Bourdieu’s (1977) ideas on linguistic exchange and linguistic capital might suggest that particular languages have differential value in the global sphere. Park (2008), for example, pointed out the positioning of English as a global capital. In Korea, learning English is highly valued and is perceived as a major resource for children in the globalizing world. Similarly, in today’s Czech Republic and Slovakia, English is the most often studied second language, followed by other large western European languages such as German or Spanish, not necessarily Slavic languages such as Russian. While Russian is a language of a large country, the history of Russian

oppression and the forced “Russification” in the eastern European countries resulted in deprecation of the language in post-1989 Czech Republic and Slovakia. The perceived global importance of English as well as of the global unimportance of the Czech and Slovak languages explain the some of the parental positioning of the HL as rather impractical.

It surprised for me, however, that in the globalizing world parents did not expect their child to use the HL in any practical way, such as in a job of an interpreter, a language teacher, or an employee of an international company and/or organization. All these options would allow for a practical use of the HL, even within the United States. The positioning of the HL suggests that one of the major reasons behind HL loss in the second generation may be the fact that these languages are not considered and approached as practical investments. While a number of researchers (Fishman, 1991; Hornberger, 1998; Valdés, 2005) made an effort to reframe the way we see HLs in the United States today, it is still a reality that schools, society, and even the immigrant parents themselves approach HLs not as resources.

Heritage language as a sentimental link to the past. Since HL does not have a major expected practical future use for most families, why do the parents dwell on it so much? What role does it play? The second most important motivation for HL maintenance was the transmission of ethnic identity and cultural heritage. However, the parents often realized that the children are growing up much more American than they would have wanted, similar to findings of Zhou (1997). As such, the preservation of an ethnic identity became more of a dream than a reality for these parents and it was often framed in sentimental terms. The parents realized that their children do not share their ethnic belonging but still attempted to provide children with a link to the past and a connection to their heritage and roots, perhaps more to fulfill their own needs, not so much the needs of the children at the time of research.

What is more, it is possible to argue that even the motivations for HL *use*, as listed above (speaking to grandparents and visits overseas), present motivations that are rather temporary and

mainly oriented towards the past. The trips are organized more often when the children are young, because the children are willing to go and because the parents might not yet work full-time, thus having enough time to spend a summer overseas. With time, the trips often become scarcer or stop entirely. Second, grandparents may pass away, thus eliminating the most important reason for HL maintenance for the children into the future.

Parental positioning of the HL, as fulfilling sentimental needs and being oriented towards the past, is in sharp contrast to the ways in which they position English: as a language that is practical to know for the future, essential for academic success in the United States, and necessary in securing a good job anywhere in the world. Patrícia expresses this sentiment very clearly:

When one looks at it in a rational way, one would see that the child, in fact, does not need [the HL] for life, you know? But your inner need, the emotional need... (...) is for the child indeed to know the Slovak language, to be able to communicate with grandma and grandpa... (Patrícia)

Although communication with grandparents, transnational visits, and ethnic identity seem to constitute a crucial drives for HL maintenance in most families, I argue that they represent a sentimental and past-oriented motivation. Maintenance of the HL is often framed as something emotional, but certainly not essential or necessary for the children's future life. Knowledge of the HL is for the children to understand where their parents came from, the parents' ethnic identity, and cultural heritage. This positioning is important for our understanding of the parents' home language practices and choices they make along the way. As will be documented in Chapter 5, the HL often makes way for the practical and future-oriented English, which as is perceived as more important or a "priority" by all parents. Discussing the concept of *sustainability* of a language, García (2011) suggested the need to approach languages as "dynamic and future-oriented, rather than static and past-oriented" (p. 7). She pointed out that the very term *heritage* (language) refers towards the past, suggesting no future practical utility. Therefore, we need to reconceptualize our approach to HLs so that the children themselves want to learn.

The findings illustrate a positioning of HLs as orientated towards the past. Only two exceptions, Jarmila and Lucie, did expect their children to use the HL in a practical way – either at school or at the workplace overseas. Considering the parental depiction of the role of the HL, I argue that the very positioning of the HL by the parents has consequences for their language practices at home. As long as the HLs are perceived – and portrayed by schools and larger society – as an endeavor that belongs in the immigrant home but not necessarily in any public sphere, such as schools or larger society, the beliefs of the parents are bound to stay the same. As long as the HLs are seen as impractical and irrelevant for the future of the children, not even parents will assure that the children learn these languages.

Heritage language as a tool to other goals. While some of the motivations for HL maintenance involved children's need for the *use* of the language (such as communication with family and people overseas), other types of motivations focused on different benefits of the *exposure* to the HL, not specifically on the *proficiency* in the HL. These motivations include HL as an aspect of ethnic heritage and identity, HL as a door to other languages, cognitive benefits, and appreciation of cultural differences. In the view of the parents, teaching their children an HL fosters not only their ethnic identity but also a general openness to other cultures; it also allows the children approach tasks in creative and imaginative ways and helps them learn other languages faster. However, all these motivations share a common attribute in that they all approach the HL as a *tool* to other goals, rather than a goal in itself.

None of these motivations demands an actual proficiency in or active usage of the HL. What matters in these motivations is the experience with the HL, the exposure to the HL, and perhaps a passive understanding. However, these motivations do not encourage further study and use of the HL. In approaching the HL as an instrument to other goals in a number of different ways, parents revealed that they had other ambitions and expectations for their children. The question that remains to be answered in future research regarding these tool-to-other-goals motivations is: To what degree are

these motivations a reaction to the reality of unfulfilled dreams? The parents' focus on these "other" goals may be a form of a justification of the reality in which the children either never learned the HL or acquired only a semi-fluent command of the spoken language. It is unclear, whether these motivations were always present or whether they were invented later as a coping mechanism. In claiming these other benefits for the children the parents could justify for themselves that their usage of the HL at home has had at least some benefits and results (even if not the HL fluency of the children).

Gap between Dreams and Reality

Regardless of the original goals, language practices in the families, proficiency of the children, and the type of family, all immigrant mothers in the 10 families voiced sadness that the children's command of the HL and their sense of ethnic identity does not match their original expectations. In addition, a number of parents confessed their own current practices often do not align with their original plan, realizing that they were being less consistent and rigorous in their HL maintenance efforts than they had planned. They were using more English than they wished, not reading to the children in the HL as much as they had planned, or not practicing reading consistently enough. Altogether, many participants reported their original goals proved difficult or impossible to reach, causing the parents to give up their original expectations over time and settle for a smaller or a different goal.

The degree of mismatch between the original goals and the current language realities varied widely across families. While mothers in some families (Jarmila, Bohdana, Lucie) felt they were able to reach most of the goals they had set for themselves and their children, others experienced a much larger gap (Klára, Patrícia, and others), inflicting a dose of disappointment for the parents. Parental reactions to the perceived gap ranged from complete resignation (and lowered expectations) to postponing of the goals, to a relative satisfaction with the HL use by the children as is.

Adjusted expectations. Helena, Klára, Patrícia, and Diana experienced the greatest disparity between their original goals and their children's current HL proficiency, causing them to change their expectations more or less radically. They all had children aged between 8 and 14, only Diana's younger son was 5 years old at the time of fieldwork. Diana, for example, had great plans about starting a Slovak school where several families would take turns hosting a lesson every week.

I had plans! I had *big* plans. I was writing a similar research paper like you at a community college, you know... bilingualism, families... (...) and when the time came... when children came, and the situation was like... they are in school, I am at work, this and that... And my dreams about getting together... with a friend who was also that *eager* ...and starting a Slovak school with other friends (...) b-u-t... somehow it did not happen! It seems to me that... we are not as thorough, such that we would follow through because... everyone is suddenly busy; there is not enough time now... but you know, we had plans to meet every Sunday... once in my house once in her house (...) to seriously teach [the children] the ABC's, and... read and write! (Diana)

Diana attempted to provide a literacy instruction for her children herself but it proved quite difficult and frustrating. Today, her expectations are lower: she is hoping her children would be able to read simple signs and sentences in Slovak, but she does not expect their ability to read any kind of a more complex text, let alone writing correctly. Diana shares:

You know... I would like for them to be able to read, for... when they are older and come [to Slovakia], to be able to read (...) *milk, butter, bread*... and things like that (...). They may be able to read a text in a newspaper... but to really *pin down* what it is about... I am not sure of that. (Diana)

Similarly, Patrícia had originally expected her daughter "to master the language... at least... well, to be fluent, simply to a degree of fluency that she would be able to communicate with my family..." (Patrícia). Today, her daughter can understand Slovak, but using the language beyond a few simple sentences is difficult for her during the year in the United States. Patrícia had also hoped for basic literacy and even attempted to introduce some spelling rules, however, the effort was soon abandoned as overly difficult. Patrícia thought she did all she could but the effort proved simply impossible, leading her to adjust her expectations. She is no longer determined to teach her daughter how to read. In

addition, she is now emphasizing other benefits of HL exposure than simply the child's ability to use the HL fluently, hoping to have provided her daughter with a head start for learning of other languages:

Now I made this humble commitment... I am giving her a predisposition to be able to learn other, different language... kind of a gift... and that's it. I cannot do more. (Patrícia)

The largest gap was experienced by Klára. Her husband, Ken, was able and willing to take their daughter (now 14) to the Czech Republic for prolonged summer trips for six years in a row. In addition, he himself learned Czech to a degree that he is able to communicate. Altogether, much effort had been exerted by the parents. Klára shared, "Yeah, okay, so the *beginning* was that I had *really* intention to raise my children bilingual." She used to speak exclusively Czech to her daughter and even started weekly lessons with her to introduce some basic reading skills at home. However, the challenges to HL use and maintenance were so intense that the lessons only lasted a couple of months and today the language used at home is characterized as "completely English." (Ken). Klára explained:

It's just... life will take it away. You know it... it... just like [my husband] said, you know... he is working hard, I am working hard, we come home, and it's basically 6:30 when the family sees each other and... we're just so [tired]! (Klára)

In addition, Klára feels that it is just not possible to maintain the HL with such a strong pressure and presence of English:

When [my daughter] was age of your children [4 to 6], we were speaking more Czech. And the *time* as the kids get older, as you get absorbed in American life, it's just less and less and less... And I see that on everybody, you know... With [my friend]... she is *so much better than me*, and [my husband] was always like, 'You see... how can *she* do it and *you* can't do it!?' And now he sees that, you know, there is this decrease... for her too, it's just... comes with life! I see that the only way, how to preserve *something*... in [my daughter's] head is to travel. Just to go there.

Helena and Hynek are the last of the families experiencing a large gap. Helena shared, "The story with [our son] is... I am sorry that I... wasn't [tougher]... in that I would keep speaking Czech to him." Helena gave up the thought that she herself would be able to teach him some Czech. She admits:

We don't study [Czech] with him, we have hard enough time with English and that's the priority, insofar that we live here English is the number one language here, so we [simply] just press for the basics for school. (Helena)

Still, Helena would love to see him learning Czech in the future but she sees this outlook as rather doubtful: "I would like that, yeah I would like that. (...) But I don't know whether he might ever manage to do that." (Helena)

As demonstrated in all of these four cases, the experienced gap between the original expectations and the current language use and proficiency of the children led the parents to significantly lower their expectations. While all these mothers wished that the children might eventually re-learn the language at some point in the future, they also realized that any and all attempts for the revitalization of the language would be in the hands of the children and would happen only if the children moved overseas for at least some period of time. In most cases, however, the parents saw that any more learning of the language is rather unlikely to happen for their children.

Justifications. These mothers not only adjusted their expectations, they also offered a number of justifications for the current situation, perhaps as a coping strategy to make sense of their current situation. Klára's explanation, for example, constituted an interesting move from the emphasis on the HL proficiency to a focus on the "other" motivations for HL maintenance, as earlier in Chapter 4:

I actually think that really the... the attempt of pushing the second language (...) opened up something in that brain because you are accessing different parts of the brain, and it usually helps kids to study another language. And she is doing pretty well [in terms of her studying Spanish at this time]! (Klára)

To this point, Ken added about their daughter, "As she gets further and further in Spanish, I think if she ever returned to Czech it would help!" In this way, the parents were able to frame the HL exposure as a benefit to the child even though the actual proficiency was rather low. In addition, reconsidering her resources, Klára was able to define even a very small achievement as a success,

perhaps in order to justify all her efforts that went into the HL maintenance. She claimed with a bit of pride, “[My daughter] can still... I mean she can still make these... Czech sounds!” Some letters in Czech (such as ř or ž) are rather difficult to pronounce for a non-native speaker, and they are the exact sounds Anděla often avoided in her speech with her children to make the language easier for them. Thus, Klára’s daughter’s ability to pronounce these sounds earned her the praise of her mother, although such an achievement is far below the original goals Klára had set for her daughter. Similarly, Diana and Patrícia also redefined their effort from focusing on the child’s HL proficiency into fostering a positive relationship to the Slovak culture, hoping to “at least” provide a motivation for the children to relearn the language in the future. Another option to justify one’s situation was to look around and compare oneself to the families where “children don’t speak at all!” (Diana) Generally, finding something positive in one’s situation helped framing even a very small advancement as “success.” Together, these justifications helped the parents come to terms with the current proficiency of their children.

Postponing goals. Parents of younger children also experienced a gap between the original goals and reality but remained more optimistic about the future, often postponing goals to be fulfilled “later.” Bohdana, for example, considers it important to teach the children how to read and write, in case they would move to Slovakia in the future. Still, she shared that, “At present, I approach it as... a conversational language... and don’t attach too much importance to it, for now.” When asked about any more specific plans for teaching the literacy skills in HL, Bohdana shared:

We intend to do that later... because now my priority is that [my son] learns everything in English properly... and... I don’t want to mix reading in Slovak into it, because the sounds and everything is different, so I don’t want to confuse him since they are just learning to read and write [in English] in first grade.

Bohdana continued, reflecting upon her current priorities, and realizing her approach to the HL might have changed over time:

Perhaps I am falling away from... from the teaching. I want to teach them to read and write, of course, but... Slovak is such a difficult language that to teach them all the grammar well... that will be very challenging. (...) So... I will be glad to see them speak the language, but I would rather have them to learn another foreign language. Like at school. (Bohdana)

Two other families with younger children are both mixed marriages. Milada is consciously focusing on Slovak language and enforcing the “Slovak-only” rule between herself and the children. However, she sees the limitations as to what she can do with the time and resources available to her. Working full time, her time with the children is limited, same as her chances to spend a whole summer overseas. Milada recalls:

Excel? Yeah, I thought they would! [laughing] I don’t know if I really had an idea... I just realized later on, that... there is no... If I am not gonna kill myself I am not gonna make them speak perfectly and with a perfect accent and with a perfect grammar and... so I just... I am gonna... I am doing whatever I *can*... just to... to keep it up! (Milada)

Milada and her father even attempted reading instruction with the older son but the alternative spelling system was “very confusing” for the child, who was just beginning to learn spelling in English. Still, Milada has hope: “I have a feeling that what’ll happen is in a couple of years... when they... when [the older son] is comfortable in English... ..then he can go back and very easily learn to read [in] Slovak. I don’t think that would be hard for him.” Mark agrees and follows up with a justification for why it is a good idea to wait with introducing of the Slovak grammar later:

I mean... grammar’s learnt anyway. (...) My guess is on grammar – regardless of when you do it... you don’t pick it up by hearing it... You need to specifically sit down and study... and I think... if you’re gonna study there is no advantage doing that when you are a kid (...) [it is] probably *easier* when you are older. (Mark)

Finally, Radka and Ron, who are both working outside the home, and who relied on *au pairs* for childcare, seem to be able to pursue their goals and even attempt some reading, as they wanted. While Ron expects the children to be “a native speaker in both languages [Czech and English],” Radka sees that the maintenance of fluency in Czech is becoming more difficult with the older child, as he inserts a lot of

English expressions into his Czech sentences. It is also much more difficult to persuade her son to read Czech words than to have him sit down and read in English. Radka keeps trying and she hopes the children would be able to communicate in Czech as well as to read and write in Czech.

Mothers in all three families see challenges in HL maintenance but they remain mostly optimistic. Bohdana, for instance, believes that

I think they will keep the language... although the development of the language will not be as strong... they will certainly stay at a certain level and... if they don't travel to Slovakia and will not... study the language, their vocabulary will not be [very large].

Unlike the mothers with older children, these three mothers seem to believe that the children would develop the HL more in the future. At the same time, the mothers of younger children see themselves as the major actors in their children's future HL education, being convinced they would indeed work on the reading skills with the children later. Typically, they postpone the literacy training into the future for fears that it might interfere with English literacy skills of the children.

Relative satisfaction with reality. The sentiments of lesser than ideal fluency of the children were echoed by virtually all participants, including the parents of the most fluent children. While both Jarmila and Lucie expressed they would like their children to learn more, they were generally content with their children's command of the HL. Lance shared, "The only thing we are not happy with is... is our own effort at being consistent with some of the more academic stuff. It's just that... (...) we wanted them to be able to... read and write *well*." At present, the girls would read the books required by the Slovak public school with some effort, but it is much harder for them than reading in English. Lucie would like to see them become more fluent readers in Slovak: "I'm *hoping* that... with time... as they are really comfortable reading, they *can* do that. You know, just pick up a Slovak book without even... thinking. *I have to work on that more...*" Lucie also hopes that the girls might start using more Slovak

during the year in the United States, not just when they are visiting overseas. She says, “I would love for them to speak back to me in Slovak more. And that’s... that’s something I would like to improve...”

The son of Jarmila and Juraj is able to understand both Czech and Slovak, and to read in Slovak. While the parents are quite satisfied with their son’s fluency in the spoken language, they see that their son’s spelling in Slovak is far from perfect. Juraj explains, “No, he is not confident in writing. When he is to write a word he... he wants to (...) confirm the spelling (...) so writing is a problem.” Juraj added:

We expect he might get better in writing... in that he would have to use it there... that it would force him... But since we... don’t expect him to write novels in Slovak, then... it really does not seem as important that he knows the grammar all that well. (Juraj)

Juraj also clarified that they never really “took their stand” on the written form “because it involves more effort and... it would truly have to be done regularly” (Juraj). In addition, the parents feel their determination has decreased over time. Juraj shared, “The aspiration that... that he would read books to us and that we would correct him when he pronounces something so that he knows the pronunciation... we gave that out.” And he continues:

I don’t think we... were rigorous enough in the training... (...) At the beginning we made more effort... but as we were staying here [in the United States] longer, it was declining and declining... and it ended up being mostly about the spoken language. But since we keep using it daily, he... is maintaining some level of... practical spoken Slovak. (Juraj)

Although Jarmila and Juraj’s case can be framed as a success, the parents still felt as if they did not do enough or could have done better. Contemplating the reading practice in Slovak, Jarmila says, “I have to confess that we didn’t practice... every day.” Both Jarmila and Lucie both saw much room for improvement, and would like to have achieved even more. Mainly, they believed they could have done – or could be currently doing – more in terms of their own effort, such as being more consistent, or finding more time to practice the literacy skills. These parents explained the high proficiency of their children by the effort they had put in, a theme to be discussed below.

Parental reflections on the gap. During the interviews, parents reflected on the gap, offering explanations for the children's degree of proficiency and sharing more stories. Three interrelated themes were located from the transcripts in relation to the gap between dreams and reality: Sense of accountability, Making comparisons, and Peer pressure. All three themes point to a parental belief that they are indeed the major players (or perhaps the only players) in the children's HL learning.

Sense of accountability: It's a result of my effort (or the lack thereof). Realizing they were the only source of the HL for their children, parents in all families explained the HL proficiency of their children (either success or failure) by their own approach and the resources they had and used. While some believed they could have done more (Jarmila, Lucie), others expressed that they have done "all they could" with the time and resources available to them (Milada, Patrícia, Klára, Diana).

Even Anděla, who did not have major expectations, realized that her children would eventually be much less fluent than she originally thought. She sees her own approach as a cause. She shared:

It is true that... I was surprised that basically... [my daughters] do not speak like the children back in the Czech Republic. But then I thought – well, it's clearly because I do not speak with them like an ordinary mother in the Czech Republic, you know, because... I don't use some of the words, and it is partly because of me, you know, because the words (...) are difficult, and I say to myself, well, I'll just say it in English (...) and I used what was *easier*, which was usually the English word (...) and thus they learned what they received. (Anděla)

Anděla imagines that had they lived closer to the Czech Republic, such as in Austria or Germany, the girls could visit more often and also watch the Czech TV, which would make them "100% bilingual" (Anděla). The distance and the resources available as well as her own language practice are Anděla's explanations for why the girls are not more fluent at the moment. Milada, on the other hand, saw her limited time with the children as a major reason for why it was so difficult for them to use the HL:

Of course if they are in day care they speak English. If they are with my father... if they are home they speak Slovak. So that's just the percentage... If I would have them at home for three months straight... I bet you they would be fluent in Slovak for the... you know... not fluent but much better, that they would have *improved*. (Milada)

Mark agreed, “If Milada was home [with the kids] the kids would speak Slovak.” Mark also commented on the exposure to English in day care: “I mean... they are staying... what... three hours... four hours awake with us every day and they spend 8 hours at school every day. *Of course* they are gonna speak English, you know?” But, he added; “we are kind of doing what we can. And so far it’s working out. [My wife] is doing all the real work, though...”

Similarly, Klára complained that in the mixed marriage setting she was the only source of the language. Plus she was often too tired to switch between the languages. Ken agreed and added:

I mean it certainly would have helped if I... I mean I could have tried harder to learn Czech, you know I mean I have had this opportunity... you know if I had *really applied myself*... maybe I could have become... you know... better speaker of the language so that it’s easier for us to actually have...our home life in Czech. I mean I have never gotten that far. (...) I was lazy to... memorize... hundreds and hundreds of words... (Ken)

The main message delivered through these accounts is that the parents imagined they could have done a “better job” had they have the necessary resources, time, and resolve. Mark summed up the discussion: “I think it’d be entirely different if I didn’t... if I spoke Slovak... and we could speak Slovak [at home]... and... I mean it’s really about the balance in... in how much they speak [each language].” However, except for Jarmila and Lucie, the parents generally felt they did all they could in their situation, but they concluded they simply did not have enough resources or time to counter the strong dominance of English.

Making comparisons: “Look, they made it!” To prove their point about the potential of the parents to affect the children’s HL proficiency in both positive and negative ways, most participants gave examples of other immigrant families, framing them as either more or less successful than themselves. Generally, the mothers expressed a sense of admiration for the parents who “made it,” who were able to make their children use the HL consistently. At the same time, they showed a sense of disregard or a pity for those who didn’t. There seemed to have been a shared sense of respect toward those who “try

hard” to maintain the language among the Czechs and Slovak immigrants. Any visible success in terms of children using the HL was conceived as a major achievement of the parents, mainly of the mother.

Helena, for instance, knew another Czech woman and described her case as follows: “She is tough in that... she only speaks Czech to [the children] and they answer her in Czech, ...that she has used Czech to them since they were born.” Similarly, Lucie admires her Slovak friend for her strict approach and mainly for the results in terms of the children’s proficiency: “She is very good, her kids only speak Slovak! So when we are with them and play tennis, [my children] speak Slovak with them and that’s *great!* So it really is mutual.” Lucie continues, “Those kids are *very good, very consistent* in Slovak (...) they are very good at it. [My friend] said she *never* spoke English, and so... my kids speak *Slovak* to them, because that’s the setting!”

Diana also has an example that she looks up to. She mentioned a family where the children are “seriously signed up in a public school in Slovakia” and that the family would bring new textbooks every year and then go back for the summer and the children “simply have to know these three or four subjects... so they can pass... an exam there.” Following up each year or two with the exams, these children will have graduated from a Slovak high school and thus will be able to enroll in a public university there. However, Diana sees extremes on both sides among the people she knows:

Each Slovak or each family is... has different priorities. Some do not speak Slovak with the children *at all*. The children *don’t know anything!* Absolutely nothing in Slovak. (Diana)

Peer pressure: It’s my fault. Virtually all parents voiced the belief that the children’s fluency was closely related to the effort and resources the parents had put in (or the lack thereof). For some, this belief was further validated by a perceived sense of peer pressure to maintain the HL. Both Anděla and Patrícia were criticized for not having taught their children the HL properly. Anděla, who is generally content with her children’s “Czenglish,” shared her experience with this transnational pressure:

It is true that I always get scolded by my... mother-in-law... that... not by my mom, no, because she can imagine that it is difficult... to maintain it when the girls don't hear the language all day long... but my mother-in-law just [thinks] that we should have taught them properly. (Anděla)

Other parents echoed this experience claiming to have received disapproving comments from family overseas for their "insufficient" effort to keep up the language. Helena, who made a decision early on to switch to English and her son does not speak Czech today, has heard numerous disapproving comments about her decision from friends but also from random Czech or Slovak people. Examples of the reproofs she received were such as these: "You should speak only Czech to the boy! You are Czech, he is born to a Czech mother, [your husband] is [Czech]..." or "You don't have any excuse! [Your husband] is Czech, you are Czech, so why didn't you teach [your son] Czech?" And Helena explains:

So *some people* let it out... (...) And I'm cool, you know. It's just like... it's.... everybody has their own opinion. I mean I made a choice (...), I didn't speak to him Czech, so that's what *I did*. That's it. (Helena)

However, when Helena talked about her experience at a different time, she positioned her actions as *faulty* and deserving *blame*, quite in line with the internalized peer pressure: "I was like... walking the fine line... and I made a decision just to speak English to him, basically. I made that decision. And I guess it's my fault." (Helena) She not only takes all the responsibility for her son's non-proficiency in Czech, she also conveys the sense of shame for not pursuing the HL:

So... we speak to [our son] mostly in English... yeah... scarcely ever in Czech. Which is our fault. (...) And it remained that way. And *my fault* was also in that I scold him in Czech, and he... doesn't like it. That means... I even make the language sound repulsive. And that is also my fault. (...) [At such situations] he knows that something *bad* happened, so that's why he's like, 'I am not responding to Czech. Forget it. I don't like it! I don't like when you speak Czech!' ...that's what he says to me, you know? So it's... probably psychological, it's my fault. (Helena)

In general, HL maintenance was approached as a desirable goal, and any success was framed as an achievement of the mother. By contrast, not teaching the HL is seen as neglect or a result of insufficient effort of the parents. It is important to note that this pressure came entirely from

transnational context (such as from other immigrant parents, Czech or Slovak friends, and family overseas), and *not* from the dominant society (such as schools). The parents are thus exposed not only to the assimilatory pressures from the dominant society *to support English language development*, but also to transnational pressures *to maintain the HL*. When these two goals are perceived as in conflict, however, the parents always prioritize English.

Conclusion

The most important purpose for HL maintenance mentioned by parents in 10 families, was simply to provide a means of communication between the children and the grandparents. The parents did not generally expect major usage of the HL for other purposes in the future. Therefore, fluency or at least semi-fluency in the spoken language was not a surprising goal in all 10 families. In addition, however, many parents originally had – and some still have at this time – hopes that the children would learn how to read or even write in Czech or Slovak. These relatively high goals for the children may seem surprising when compared with the positioning of the HL by the parents as it ensued from the analysis.

The exceptions on one side of the spectrum were Jarmila and Lucie, who anticipated a future use of the HL by the children, which may be one of the most important reasons they persevered and achieved a high level of fluency and even literacy in their children. On the other hand, Stanislav did not consider it important that his children would know the HL and/or the culture at all, leading him not to use the language at home and the children having no knowledge of the HL as a consequence. The rest of the families are positioned somewhere in between, voicing strong emotional reasoning for the HL but not anticipating any major use of the HL by the children. All respondents except Stanislav believe that an early exposure to the HL provides children with additional benefits, such as an increased ability to learn

other languages, better cognitive skills, and an appreciation of cultural difference among people. Table 6 summarizes the goals and motivations across families.

Table 6. Parental goals and motivations for HL maintenance

	HL Goals	Motivation #1: HL use in transnational social spaces				Motivation #2: Ethnic identity	Motivation #3: Other benefits
		Use with parents	Use with grandparents	Use overseas	Use in future life		
Jarmila	F + R + W	X	X	X	XX	XX	X
Lucie	F + R + W		X	X	XX	X	X
Bohdana	F + R + W		X	X	X	XX	X
Diana	F + R		X	X		X	X
Radka	F + R		X	X	X	X	X
Milada	F + R		X	X		X	X
Anděla	F		X	X		XX	X
Patrícia	F + R		X	X		X	X
Klára	F + R		X	X		X	X
Helena	F					X	X
Stanislav							

F Fluency in spoken HL X Motivation is present
R Reading skills XX Motivation is strongly present
W Writing skills

All parents in this study experienced a smaller or a larger gap between their original goals and the current language realities at home. As a reaction, they adjusted their expectation or postponed their goals into the future. Generally, the parents saw themselves as major players in their children's HL learning as demonstrated through the interrelated themes of Sense of accountability, Making comparisons, and Transnational pressure.

Altogether, parental goals and motivations help explain current children's HL proficiency level to a large extent. Jarmila and Lucie, but also Bohdana, have the most fluent children in the sample, while Stanislav and Helena have the children with the least knowledge of the HL. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss language practices of the parents and children in more detail and Chapter 7 summarizes the similarities and differences across families.

Chapter 5: Parental Efforts to Provide Heritage Language Exposure

Keeping in mind the parental goals, motivations, and positioning of the HL, I now focus specifically on the language practices of parents and children, examining first parental efforts to provide HL exposure (Chapter 5) and then parental efforts to make their children use and further learn the HL (Chapter 6). I attempt to answer questions such as: Considering their resources, are the parents able to maintain any aspect of the HL for their children? What practices do they use? Does HL loss occur? What does it look like? Are there differences between all-immigrant and mixed-marriage families? What roles do children, parents, schools, peers, and other people or institutions play? What conditions contribute to HL retention and HL loss? Does transnationalism of these parents encourage HL maintenance?

Research shows that exposure to HL is one of the major factors in HL maintenance (Baker, 2011; García, 2009; Nesteruk, 2010). In an ideal case, children are exposed to the HL in multiple contexts, such as at home, at school, and within a wider community of HL speakers (in an ethnic neighborhood, church, and other public spaces). Providing children with sufficient exposure to the HL, with the use of multiple strategies, was a major pursuit of the parents in this study. Milada, for example, believed that the children's proficiency is "almost 100% related to the *time they spend*... speaking one or [the] other language." Similarly, Lucie saw the major hindrance for the HL learning being "not exposing [the children to the HL] enough." In mixed-marriage families, this endeavor constituted a major challenge because the mother was typically the only source of the language for the children. In all-immigrant families, this task was generally easier because both parents were able to use the HL language at home. Instead, the all-immigrant families faced the dilemma of whether to seek an early exposure to English for the children and at what age. In other words, HL maintenance for most all-immigrant families involved not only a

question of whether it was *possible* to secure sufficient resources to teach and practice the language; it also involved the dilemma of whether it was *desirable* to focus fully on the HL within the family.

The methods of providing HL exposure included mainly 1) parental use of the HL, 2) taking transnational trips and bringing grandparents to visit in the United States, 3) arranging playdates with friends from the same linguistic background, and finally 4) other strategies for additional exposure to the HL, such as reading books, watching Czech and Slovak movies, listening to songs in the HL, and using the Internet. Each one of these strategies presented specific challenges, generally more profound in the mixed-marriage families.

Parental Use of the Heritage Language

Home was the most important place of exposure, both for mixed and all-immigrant families. Naturally, the task of HL learning and retention was more easily accomplished in families where both parents were of Czech or Slovak heritage, if they used the HL. In all but one family (Stanislav), the immigrant parents started using exclusively the HL with the children. However, not all the parents continued using only the HL with the children, although it was the original plan for most of them. Different parents voiced different reasons for using English in addition to, or instead of, the HL at home. In addition, the choice of day care venue affected children's HL fluency. Some parents deliberately stayed at home with their young children in order to increase children's exposure to the HL. Taken together, these factors combined – the type of family, the usage of the HL by the parents, and the choice of childcare – helped explain a great deal of the differences in children's HL use. Since family composition played the largest role in the home language use, I first discuss HL use in all-immigrant homes and then in mixed-marriage families.

All-immigrant Families. In all-immigrant families, the task of HL maintenance was easier simply because no English was generally spoken at the homes, at least in the beginning, supporting the literature claiming that children from intact families have greater chance to retain the HL (Alba et al., 2002; Lee & Suarez, 2009; Portes & Hao, 1998). Five families in the sample were all-immigrant, where both parents were either Czech or Slovak (Jarmila, Bohdana, Diana, Anděla, and Helena). In all of these families both parents started out using exclusively the HL at home with their children. Jarmila, for example, shared that it was natural for them to speak only Slovak at home: “We just do what feels natural... but I would never *force* him to [speak Slovak].” However, each family mentioned the dilemma of how much English to introduce for their children and when. Bohdana, for example, shared her earlier concern that too much focus on Slovak might be negatively affecting her sons’ English.

We were saying with my husband that... we perhaps need to stop this [focus on Slovak] so the children can start developing their English more... well... but many people point out to us that... (...) English comes naturally to them... and if we want to keep the Slovak language... we should... speak as much Slovak as possible. So we are trying to do that. (Bohdana)

The responses to the dilemma differed widely across the families: In some cases parents enrolled the children in a half-day preschool, in some cases they let them watch TV in English, and still other parents began using English with the children themselves. Altogether, however, these efforts to aid children with English resulted in less exposure to the HL, affecting the children’s HL proficiency.

All-immigrant families that limited the children’s exposure to English. Parents in three traditional immigrant families (Jarmila, Bohdana, and Diana) kept using the HL exclusively even as their children grew, while at the same time limiting the children’s exposure to English. In all three families the parents decided to provide children with some – but not overwhelmingly too much – exposure to English prior to kindergarten, maintaining daily conversations at home strictly in Slovak. Diana explains why some English for the children was necessary:

You know... I cannot keep [the children] in a vacuum and not teach them any English when I know they are going to school. I can't have them be *behind*, you know? Like I know they can learn fast but I didn't want to throw them into school with no English! (Diana)

Bohdana and Diana stayed at home with their small children until about age 3 and then opted to enroll their children in a short-day preschool as the first and only strategy of exposure to English.

Similarly, Jarmila and Juraj's son had a strong early exposure to Slovak because the parents came to the United States when their child was 4 years old. Upon their arrival, they didn't feel comfortable enrolling their son in day care because he had no previous experience with English thinking the transition would be too hard for him. Instead, the father stayed at home with the boy for one year prior to kindergarten to let the son familiarize himself with English in a less abrupt way. Juraj explains: "So he only learned the English... like at playgrounds, in contact with other children and... he watched TV in English, of course, the children's programs." Juraj also read children's books in English to his son at that time, which supplied the boy with just enough English that he could participate in kindergarten the following year.

In all three cases, Slovak was the language children used and heard most often every day until age 5, and they all became fluent in Slovak prior to encountering English. The process of learning one language first and then adding another one is called "sequential bilingualism" (Baker, 2011; García, 2009), as opposed to "simultaneous bilingualism" where both languages are learned at the same time. Today, children from these families now belong to the most fluent in the HL in the sample.

The initial limited exposure to English resulted in the children's lack of fluency in English when entering kindergarten. In each of these families, at least the older child (each one now 7, 9, and 15 years old) had qualified for ESL classes. The situation with the younger children was different, because they picked up and used more English at an early age from their older siblings, supporting the literature on birth order as a factor in HL maintenance (Fillmore, 1991; Shin, 2002). Still, the first-born children mastered English within a few years, perhaps with the assistance of their HL. They have developed

concepts in both languages. For Jarmila and Juraj's son, the transition was quite easy. Even with just one year of a "playground exposure" to English, he took ESL for only one year and today (when 15 years old) English is his dominant language. Juraj added: "Yes, he takes honors English... and gets straight A's."

In the case of these three families, limiting exposure to English early on seems to have had a positive effect on HL maintenance, while it did not have a detrimental effect on the children's English language acquisition and proficiency. What is more, the results suggest that in cases where the two languages have differential power and prestige (Fishman, 2001; Tse, 2001b), the HL requires a major head start if it is to be maintained. In these three cases, the children reached fluency in the minority language prior to any major exposure to English, the dominant language. The initial focus on the minority language allowed children develop concepts in Slovak firmly, helping them to retain the language longer. When the opportunities to learn and use the two languages are unequal, as is the case of Slovak and English in the United States, strongly limiting the exposure to the dominant language is beneficial for HL maintenance while not detrimental to English learning and acquisition.

All-immigrant families that provided more exposure to English. Parents in two all-immigrant families (Anděla and Helena) have used some English with the children, resulting in a much lower fluency in these children compared to the three families discussed above. Anděla and her husband began using a mix of Czech and English to the children early on for two major reasons. First, Anděla often used the language in which the word was easier to pronounce and to understand for the child; she would insert English words into her Czech sentences when speaking to her children. Anděla explains:

When the word contained things like 'ř'... when they were small I didn't want to use it because I just knew that they couldn't pronounce it and that... simply that they wouldn't remember it anyway if they couldn't say it... (...) So I always just skipped the word... and said it in English.

The second reason why Anděla used English to the children even before enrolling them in a short-day preschool was to let them become familiar with the language. Anděla read English books to

them, let them watch TV in English, and play English computer games. Neither one of her daughters attended ESL classes, but Anděla thought it possible that at school, “in case they didn’t know [the answer in English] they perhaps just kept quiet or something, rather than saying it in Czech.” Today, the parents still use a mixture of Czech and English to the children, perhaps speaking more English than Czech at home. Anděla explains further reasoning for their current approach:

It’s also because... they don’t know all the words, and... because when one is in a hurry or wants to say a lot of things at once then I don’t have time to stop and explain to them what the words mean... in Czech. (Anděla)

Helena also used English to her son. Her story reveals the possible impact of an abrupt transition from one language to another. Helena and all other family caretakers spoke exclusively Czech to the son (now 12 years old) until he reached about age 2. Then, Helena recalled:

I placed him in a day care because I had to go to work, and he stopped speaking entirely. He stopped communicating... and I... for the fear he would be behind and... started speaking English to him. (...) I was afraid he... simply that he might fall behind! (...) I don’t know, I think I panicked... that I just didn’t want him to have... any gaps (...) I simply made an effort to get him to the same level [of English] with his classmates in the preschool, you know? So I actually practiced only English with him. (Helena)

At that time, Helena and all other family members began speaking exclusively in English to the boy and this practice remained until present. Helena shared other immigrant mothers had told her they never spoke English to their children, suggesting that English was a task for schools to take care of. However, Helena is aware of the difficulties children may face in schools if they do not know any English. She says: “Then, you know, I talk to with some of them... and they have problems! And the kids get placed into ESL because they are *behind* [in] English! And I didn’t want it because *I went* to ESL class.” Helena was the only immigrant in this study who arrived in the United States as a teenager. She attended an ESL class in high school and experienced the difficulties of trying to master a subject matter while still struggling with English. She wanted to make her son’s schooling easier. Unfortunately, as she

admits, her son does have difficulties with English today, which is something she had tried to avoid in the first place by sacrificing the HL entirely for that purpose. Helena reflects:

It's hard... I am always telling him: 'You don't even have an excuse [for the low grades in English]... that you would speak Czech! You don't even *speak* Czech!' Like... you know? He understands but does not speak [Czech]. (Helena)

Although the son never spoke Czech, he can understand a general topic of conversation. Helena and Hynek speak Czech with each other, but they switch into English when the conversation involves their son or when they speak directly to him. Helena recalled that her son would at times say to the parents: "You think that I don't understand you, but I know what you are saying!" Other times, he would ask for the meaning of a particular Czech word they just used.

In both these families, parents used certain amount of English when speaking to the children, mainly to help their children become proficient in English. In neither case did these children attend ESL classes, but today they are much less fluent in the HL than children in the immigrant families that avoided the use of English at home. Anděla's children typically speak a phrase or a specific word in Czech, while Helena's son does not speak Czech at all. In addition, Helena's situation demonstrates that an abrupt abandonment of a language prior to its full acquisition may have severe consequences for the child's language development in both HL and English. Linguists define "semi-lingualism" as an insufficient command of either language (Baker, 2011).

Summary of all-immigrant families. The experiences of all-immigrant families document the parents' struggle of balancing the two languages. All families opted for some exposure to English prior to kindergarten, although the degree of exposure differed widely among participants. In general, parents perceived a *rivalry* or *opposition* between the two languages. In some cases, English was not used at home and exposure to English was generally limited so as not to interfere with HL learning; in other cases, the HL use was pushed aside not to interfere with English language development of the children.

Parents made decisions based on their priorities but also based on their beliefs as to how long it takes to acquire the dominant language and how. Helena herself experienced learning of English as a difficult process and she wished to make life easier for her son. Diana and Bohdana, on the other hand, believed the children would learn the majority language easily. This confidence led them to focus on the HL.

At the time of the fieldwork, the children in families that focused more on the HL retained the HL better than in the families where parents switched to English. The differences among the all-immigrant families are displayed in table 7. Parental HL use and a choice of day care provide a strong explanation for the children's fluency. Jarmila's son is the most fluent child in the sample, and Helena's the least fluent. Both Bohdana's and Diana's children still have a strong command of Slovak, while Anděla's children are not especially fluent in Czech.

Table 7. Home HL exposure in all-immigrant families

<i>When speaking to children, immigrant parents use:</i>	<i>No preschool</i>	<i>Half-day preschool</i>	<i>Full-day day care</i>
<i>Mostly HL</i>	Jarmila Helena (first 2 years)	Bohdana, Diana	
<i>Both HL and English</i>		Anděla	
<i>Only English</i>			Helena (after son turned 2)

Although all parents deem *some* exposure to English necessary, many of them deliberately chose to wait with introducing English as long as possible. On one hand, a strong focus on the HL has led to the initial lack of fluency in English and enrollment in ESL classes. However, as documented in the case of Jarmila's son and to a lesser degree in Diana's children, it did not prevent the children from excelling in school over time. In fact, the impact of the monolingual environment is so strong that for all children English has become or is becoming their dominant language, supporting previous findings about a rapid shift to English among second-generation immigrants (Kouritzin, 1999; Portes & Hao, 2002; Rumbaut, 2009). It appears that a major head start in the form of a strong early foundation in the HL, or the route

of “sequential bilingualism” (Baker, 2011), is necessary in order to maintain the HL in the face of the dominant language (Tse, 2001b). This is especially true for minority language with a lower prestige and opportunities for use, such as Czech or Slovak.

On the other hand, more emphasis on English early on has led to a sharp decline in the children’s HL use and to an even earlier shift towards English. Anděla and Helena markedly prioritized English development over the HL and their children now have a limited vocabulary in the HL or do not speak the language at all. It might be only a coincidence that the first three families are all Slovak, while the other two are both Czech. It still constitutes an interesting finding.

Mixed-marriage families. There were six mixed-marriage families in the sample: Lucie, Radka, Milada, Patrícia, Klára, and Stanislav. In all but one family the immigrant parent was the mother and in all cases these mothers made conscious efforts to use the HL at home. While all of the American husbands were very supportive of the HL efforts, only one of them, Ken, learned some Czech. He was even intrigued by the possibility of becoming a Czech citizen: “Like... I... I want to be a Czech citizen! Like I hope at some point... you know... I have that opportunity. But I know that I have to live like consecutive years there...” (Ken). Other spouses typically only knew a few expressions that the mother used most often, such as “hi,” “goodnight,” “great,” and other words. Still, most of them supported the mothers’ efforts of HL maintenance at least indirectly. Lance, for example, encouraged his daughters to use Slovak more often, even though he could not understand what they said.

Stanislav was the only case of the mixed-marriage family where the HL was not used at all. Interestingly, his wife Stacey took a Czech class at a local high school for a year. The classes were later cancelled for insufficient enrollment, and she stopped pursuing the language, perhaps also because Stanislav himself never used Czech at home with the children.

Limited opportunities at home. Generally, the mothers shared that their opportunities to speak the HL were limited and that they felt pressured to use more English than they wanted to, confirming previous findings that the opportunities for using the HL in mixed-marriage families are, indeed, limited (Lam, 2011; Shin 2010). Lucie explained:

Well, when we are all together... we use English, of course, because of [my husband], although sometimes I... when I just speak to *them*, I... try to use Slovak. And when I am *alone* with them... I try to *always* speak Slovak. Although it's hard sometimes when you... you know... running all day in... an English-speaking environment... to just switch. But I am trying to. (...) Whenever I speak to them I try to speak Slovak. When I want *him* to understand then I just speak English.

This practice was very common for all immigrant mothers in the mixed-marriage families. All of them struggled to code-switch between the two languages constantly in order to speak English to their husbands and to use the HL in any direct communication with the children. When the whole family was involved in a conversation, the mother used English. Radka explained that she used English when “it [was] needed for everyone to be clear on plans, or rules that we set.” Milada also used English when English-speaking relatives or friends were present “just to accommodate everybody.” Furthermore, Patrícia found numerous other occasions when she felt pressured to use English in a conversation with her daughter. In public, such as at church or at playgrounds, she felt she needed to use English “because of the other moms... so they know what I just told the child.” This involved her talking about sharing or other subjects indirectly involving other people or their children. Radka commented on this necessity to use *some* English with the children as follows:

I realized very quickly, that there would be certain amount of English I would have to speak around the children. At first, I had to make a conscious effort to speak English as necessary, but also as little as possible. It comes naturally now to speak Czech to the children and consciously decide to speak English when there is a need. (Radka)

For all other mothers, however, this code switching was much more difficult. Many had to make a conscious effort to switch to the HL and admitted they were not always consistent.

Parental transitioning to English: Issues of effort and consistency. While the immigrant mother in each family started using HL exclusively to the children, not all kept to this original plan. Using English with their husbands and everyone else during the day (such as at work, or on play dates), switching into and speaking the HL at home was not always *natural* for them, as it may have been in the all-immigrant families. Lucie and Lance's children, for example, are among the most fluent in the sample.

Still, Lucie admits that her own use of the HL involves a lot of deliberate effort:

It's very hard with the mixed marriages, you know? It's so much easier when both parents... and at home it's *just that language*, like just Slovak. (...) I find... it's hard for me. I have to make myself... and I know it's very important for [the children] to keep it up... that I force myself... just Slovak. Because it's easier to... since you speak English all day... just to... [say it in English]. Yeah, and this year I am *really trying hard*, just to... be really consistent. (Lucie)

Often it was simply easier for the mothers to use English rather than to switch to the HL. Patrícia and Klára have encountered bigger challenges and decided to allow more English to be spoken at home. Patrícia is now using *some* English in communication with her older daughter, and Klára has switched into English entirely. Among the major reasons mentioned by these two mothers are their occasional inability to express themselves in the HL and their inability to be consistent in the HL use (to switch languages depending on the family member).

Patrícia, for example, explained that speaking exclusively Slovak to her daughter was easier when the girl was smaller than it is today. She stated, "Now it often happens that we get into some typically American situations, and I somehow... don't know how to express myself in Slovak." Patrícia shared that she often finds herself thinking in English and that English seems to have a richer vocabulary, including words that "do not even exist in Slovak" (Patrícia). Patrícia explains:

So when I sometimes need to tell something to [my daughter] (...), when I need to actually *explain* something to her... sometimes I say it in English, but... I generally try to have at least the ordinary conversation in Slovak. (...) But sometimes, I have to admit I talk to her in English.

Klára also admitted that using the HL consistently required too much work. Ken, who learned some Czech, remembered that their family used to have a “Czech day” here and there, when they would use only Czech at home. However, it mostly led to frustrations, as the spouses were unable to make themselves understood to each other. Both Ken and Klára explained that it was simply too much work for them. Ken: “It’s just... yeah. I mean we are so tired at the end of the day!” And Klára added:

It’s just life will take it away. You know it... it... just like Ken said, you know, he is working hard, I am working hard, we come home, and it’s basically 6:30 when the family see[s] each other and... we’re just so [tired]. (Klára).

At present, Klára uses only English to both her husband and her daughter, even though both the daughter and Ken are able to understand Czech if spoken slowly and with simpler vocabulary. Klára starts speaking Czech to her daughter only before an upcoming trip to the Czech Republic “so she can communicate with grandma just a little bit” (Klára). At the beginning, however, Ken devoted a lot of effort to HL maintenance, taking his daughter to spend time with her grandparents in the Czech Republic for many summers. During the interviews, he expressed his concern that Klára may not have been trying hard enough to use Czech language at home consistently:

I felt like I was pushing much harder for her to learn Czech than [my wife] was! (...) I was fighting to get [our daughter] to the Czech Republic in the summers.... I was the one to sign her up... at that [pre]school! (...) ‘Cause I would come back and [Klára] would immediately start speaking English to [the daughter]... and I’m like... ‘[Our daughter] and I... *worked* all summer, and she’s... gotten pretty good at it!’ I mean, not nearly like native, but... you know, she was starting to get back again, and talking, and having friends, and... playing, and... and then we come home and after like [some time]... Klára was.... gone back to English again! (Ken)

Only later did Ken observe that Klára generally had a hard time switching languages depending on the person she spoke to. He shared:

Klára struggled to go quickly to me English and then quickly to [our daughter] Czech. She just couldn’t do it. (...) I would watch her go back to the Czech Republic and she struggled... like she would speak English to people for a day or two... before she realized [that they don’t understand English] (Ken).

Klára agreed to the assessment, “I really have problem, I am... I look at my mom and I speak English with her!” Recently, Klára visited the Czech Republic by herself and she remembers the trip being a treat for her as she didn’t have to switch constantly back and forth from Czech to English.

Although code-switching difficulties were more typical for parents in mixed marriages, Anděla also shared that it was often easier for her to speak in English about what happened during the day. When she wanted to tell her husband (who is also Czech) what someone else had told her during the day, she would just repeat the sentence exactly how she heard it and not translate it into Czech.

These accounts suggest that language attrition takes place even for the first-generation immigrants. With increased immersion in an English-only environment the HL suffers and recedes, even for an adult immigrant (Polinsky, 2008; Zhou, 2001). However, because the parents acquired English in the process of sequential bilingualism (Baker, 2011) only after their native language was firmly established and supported by formal schooling, the attrition proceeds at a much slower rate than it does for their children, who never acquired the language firmly and who had no access to formal instruction in the HL. In addition, these stories also highlight that code switching between languages is difficult not only for children, as previously acknowledged (Reyes, 2004; Shin & Milroy, 2000), but also for the parents. My findings show that using the HL at home does not need to feel natural for parents in mixed marriages, and that parents are also torn between the two languages and cultures.

Parental use of English because of insufficient HL proficiency of the children. The second most important reason for parental transitioning into English was the children’s insufficient proficiency in the HL, that is, their inability to understand their parents in the HL. Patrícia, for example, felt she needed to use English when speaking with her daughter about school or when helping her with homework. In order to help her daughter understand a concept or a rule, she felt she needed to use the *teacher’s words* to make any sense to her child. She offered two examples:

We were learning letters, you know? I have to teach her how to write and read [in English] at home. So they have the letters... divided according to the height... (...) Like *sky letter*, *grass letter*, and I think an *earth letter*. Probably. Or *water letter*... earth letter, or something like that... And now I cannot tell her: *travove pismenko* [grass letter]... that's confusing. I have to tell her *grass letter*. And thus you are really getting into English again. (...) Or when they have math. She... when I ask her 'Kolko je styry plus styry? [How much is four plus four?]' ...she looks at me and asks: 'mama, what does *styry* mean? But when I say: 'Kolko je *four plus four*?' then she begins to count right away. So (...) I don't know whether I should mix the Slovak into it... in addition to all the things she needs to know to school. And if it's not easier just to tell her in English and that's it! (Patrícia)

Patrícia realized that when she wanted to help her daughter understand math, she had to do it in English. She sums up this tendency to use more English with regret, "More and more... when we discuss something school-related... we speak in English, I am sorry to say." Klára mentioned the very same situation. She came to the United States with her son from a previous marriage, when he was in fourth grade. Klára describes her experience helping her son with math homework, using the Czech language to explain concepts and math methods:

And I said: 'Oh, this is simple... let me show you how to do it!' And he said: 'Mom, I have no idea what you are saying!' And I said: 'What? I am speaking *Czech*! You... you are *Czech*! (...) ' And he said: 'But you are using terminology I have never heard!' (...) ...we are using a *different* terminology.' ...Well, if you say (...) *rovnice* [equation], *odmocnina* [square root]... he... never heard what an *odmocnina* was because he did not get there in Czech. So when I say *odmocnina* he doesn't know what it is... because they learn it in English.... And... some mathematical *methods*... are taught differently in American schools than in Czech schools. So he says: 'Oh, mom, I am totally confused now... please stop, I don't understand the problem at all anymore!'

Using the HL when helping children with homework proved counterproductive for most mothers of older children. Even Jarmila, who uses Slovak to her son at all other times, shared that when discussing specific tasks in academic disciplines, such as math, physics, or chemistry with their son, they switch to English in order to help the child understand a concept. Jarmila explains, "When it's necessary... when we are working on a homework with [our son], then we switch to English." And Juraj added, "And then we use the technical terms... in English. (...) In science... we prefer not to mix Slovak into it." Jarmila agrees: "You just have to do it in English." Both these parents have advanced degrees

from a Slovak university, one parent in biology and the other in chemistry. They would love to teach their son the subject matter, such as the terminology in chemistry, in Slovak. They even think the Slovak terminology would make it easier for him to understand the system of chemical elements. In both Czech and Slovak, the naming follows a clear logic while in English students have to simply memorize all the elements. Still, the parents see it as “undesirable” to use the Slovak jargon with their son because it only complicates the problem. While Jarmila limited using English strictly to math and science, both Patrícia and Klára encountered more obstacles and eventually they used a lot more English than originally planned or expected. Today, their children belong to the less fluent in the sample.

The issue of fluent communication between parents and children in relation to language shift has been pointed out in the research literature, documenting that when children are unable to use the HL, mutual communication may be disrupted, further leading to intergenerational alienation, conflict, and loss of respect for the parents. Tseng and Fuligni (2000), for example, surveyed 620 adolescents of Asian, Filipino, and Latin American backgrounds, and found that children who communicated in the native language with their parents reported the highest levels of cohesion and discussion. Contrary to these findings, my study suggests that when parents are fluent in English, the communication between parents and children need not be disrupted. In fact, using English was a choice of these parents *in order to* enable a fluent communication between themselves and the children. Parental level of English proficiency is probably the major reason for these new findings. All parents in this study were fluent in English.

In addition to parental use of the HL, the choice of day care influenced the overall amount of the children’s exposure to English and to the HL. In the mixed-marriage families, only Radka and Milada worked full time even when their children were small (younger than 5). Interestingly enough, children in both families still use some of the HL at home. It is possible to hypothesize that other factors were

involved in their children's relative proficiency in the HL: Milada put more pressure on the children to speak the HL than any other parent, while Radka chose to use services of *au pairs* from Slavic countries instead of an English-only day care in order to limit the children's exposure to English. However, only last year's *au pair* was from the Czech Republic. Patrícia, Klára, and Lucie all opted for a half-day preschool instead of a full day care. Their choice, however, did not always result in their children's active usage of the HL.

Summary of mixed-marriage families. The experiences of mixed-marriage families show that it is a challenging task for one parent to provide a sufficient exposure to the HL, being the only source of the language for the children. The children in all mixed-marriage families were always more proficient in English than in the HL and none of them qualified for ESL classes. These families did not face the dilemma of how much English to introduce. Instead, their main quest was to provide as much exposure to the HL as possible.

However, some parents found it difficult to use the HL consistently with the children for a number of reasons, and many transitioned into using more and more English over time. The reasons included the challenge to code-switch between languages constantly, the pressure to use English in certain situations, the occasional parental inability to express themselves in the HL, and finally the children's inability to understand enough of the HL.

Although some mothers were able to overcome the challenges easier than others (Lucie, Milada, and Radka), even their children were never quite fluent in the HL, as compared to the all-immigrant families. It appears that when children are simultaneously exposed to the dominant language and the HL in a process of "simultaneous bilingualism" (Baker, 2011), as is the case in all mixed marriages, the power of English overshadows the HL. When exposed to both, the language of lesser power and prestige (Fishman, 2001; Tse, 2001b) has little chance to develop successfully.

Consequently, the more English parents used with and around their children, the faster the children stopped using (and even understanding) the HL. See table 8.

Table 8. Home HL exposure in mixed-marriage families

<i>When speaking to children, immigrant parent used:</i>	<i>No preschool</i>	<i>Half-day preschool</i>	<i>Full-day day care</i>
<i>Mostly HL</i>	Radka*	Lucie (Patrícia-past) (Klára-past)	Milada
<i>Both HL and English</i>		Patrícia	
<i>Only English to kids</i>		Stanislav Klára	

* Radka's family used *au pairs* from Slavic countries instead of a full-day day care.

Radka, Milada, and Lucie have much more HL-fluent children than Patrícia, Klára, and Stanislav. Still, while parental usage of the HL and the choice of a childcare might explain some of the differences between families, they do not explain, for example, why Milada's children are able to understand most Slovak and even use it actively at home at times. Milada works full time and her children spend 9 hours a day in an English-only day care. Many parents, including Milada, used additional strategies to provide exposure and opportunities to learn the HL, such as taking transnational trips, bringing grandparents from overseas, encouraging children to use the HL, organizing play dates with friends from the same linguistic background, and using books, videos, and the Internet to support the HL.

Transnational Trips and Grandparents Visiting in the United States

Besides active usage of the HL by the parents, transnational visits were described as the major tool for HL maintenance in both mixed marriage and all-immigrant families. In fact, Lucie and Lance see their annual trips to Slovakia as an essential strategy for their daughters' HL retention. Lucie states:

I am just very grateful because I think a big part of that is that we could always go for a *longer* time there, you know? When they were smaller we stayed 3 months a few times and then once they started school we only could stay 2 months. And I put them into Slovak preschool ...školka; I put them in there, which I thought was great. (Lucie)

Positive effects of trips. Recent research described the benefits of these transnational, or “sojourning” trips not only for HL learning but also for a healthy identity formation of the immigrant-origin children (Kondo 1997; Nesteruk, 2010; Rong, 2005). For the participant families in this study, the trips had a strong positive effect on the children’s fluency and their vocabulary in the HL, mainly because of the full immersion in the language in all aspects of their daily life. For some children, it is only there that they spoke the HL. Lucie shares about her daughters that today

Slovak... they speak fine, but there are mistakes... grammar mistakes... you know... like... (...) endings they mess up or whatever... but as they are *there*, the longer they are there I could see how they are improving. So... but yeah, they make mistakes. (Lucie)

While the girls speak Slovak when in Slovakia as well as soon after their arrival back to the United States, they eventually use mostly English with the mother. All other parents have this experience, claiming the HL improves while overseas, but soon after they return, the children slowly lose the fluency and the ability express themselves in the HL. Patrícia also sees the visits in Slovakia as the best strategy for HL maintenance. She has also placed her daughter into a preschool overseas for some of the time to provide her with the opportunities, as well as the necessity, to communicate with other children in Slovak. Then, directly after the return to the United States, the majority of the conversations with her daughter were in Slovak, slowly giving way to more and more English, Patrícia recalls.

While the strong English-only environment in the United States makes all the children sooner or later switch from using some of the HL to using only English with their mothers after the trip, the same peer pressure seems to work the other way around, when the children are overseas. Lucie’s girls seem to prefer the language depending on whether they are in the United States or in Slovakia, as if attempting to assume the insider status. Lance recalls an experience with his older daughter:

If you are in [a] store *here*, she would not want you to speak... Slovak to her... she would want you to speak English. But if you are in that same store in... Slovakia, she would not want you to speak English. She would want you to speak Slovak to her. (Lance)

Lucie affirmed: “Yeah, I tried to speak... I spoke English to her once in Bratislava in a grocery store and she was like: ‘sssst... poslovensky [in Slovak]!’” Diana also reported that her son refused to speak English in Slovakia, even if asked only for a simple translation. She shares that her older son attempted not to speak *any English at all* when in Slovakia:

When we are there, [my older son] refuses to speak English! Yeah! *There* he will not say a word in English... he will try hard... of course he would insert a word here and there when he really doesn’t know... then he is *forced* to do it. But when... let’s say we are outside and he speaks with his cousins... and when they ask him: ‘How do you say this and this [in English]?’ ...he doesn’t want to say it! Not for the world! He simply wants to... like he feels... he doesn’t want to be different! He wants to be *part of*... like he wants to *blend in*, you know? He doesn’t want to stick out. (Diana)

The peer pressure to use the HL overseas was mentioned by others as well, further affirming the importance of such trips for HL maintenance. At the same time it highlights the children’s desire to be considered part of the mainstream, not framed as outsiders or immigrants. As long as the use of languages other than English is perceived by the children (and society) as a mark that sets them apart and frame them as “others,” heritage languages have little hope for revitalization in the United States. Some researchers (Cervantes-Soon, 2014) claim that redefining “children of immigrants” as “American transnationals” with unique skills is crucial for their broader inclusion in the society.

Trips overseas not only motivate the children to use the HL but also often require them to do so. Lance explains how: “[The girls] go into settings where... ahm... I’m not there and Lucie is not there either! So they will go to... a camp for 10 days, and no one speaking English!” Other options include attending a preschool, or being with grandparents who do not speak English. After a strong exposure to Slovak Lucie’s girls even speak Slovak to each other, which is quite unusual for any family.

Sometimes... as I said, when we are like... longer time together and I just, you know.... and consistent and just speaking Slovak, then they... as they speak to me finally in Slovak, they would speak to each other in Slovak. (...) I wish it were more often! Unfortunately it’s mostly English. I have to.... *keep trying!* (...) But kids are sneaky! They start speaking English [again]. (Lucie)

Challenges. While all parents were aware of the linguistic benefits of these transnational trips, not all were able to afford to travel for as long as a whole summer, mainly because of limited vacation time from work. Many families could go overseas only once every two years for a short period of time. To compensate for the insufficient time overseas, many families chose to bring grandparents over to the United States to stay with the family for a prolonged period of time.

Lucie is the only parent who still takes the children to Slovakia every summer for two to three months. Her part-time job as an instructor at a community college allows for these long visits. Her parents do not visit often, because they see the girls every year in Slovakia. Similarly, Bohdana, who is still at home with her children, goes overseas every two years for the whole summer, while the other year grandparents come visit here for about two months at a time.

A number of parents mentioned they travelled overseas often early on, but with time their trips became less frequent or shorter or both. Diana, for example, took the children to Slovakia every year for the whole summer for the first five years. At present, she can only afford to go every two years and stay for only two weeks, pointing out her limited vacation and the cost of these trips. Grandparents come visit Diana's family in the alternative years. Diana regrets the trips cannot be longer and more frequent:

It's not possible to go every year. It can't be helped. And now... since I started working... now the vacation! I am now limited by the summer because of the children, the school... and then at work, you know... I don't get enough [time off]... and... two weeks isn't really worth it. (Diana)

Two other mothers, both in mixed-marriage families, experienced this decline in their travelling overseas. Patrícia used to be able to take her daughter to Slovakia every summer for the first six years. However, since her second daughter was born two years ago, travel and lodging overseas has become more complicated, and it has been almost three years now since their last visit. Her daughters' decline in the ability to use and even understand Slovak has been much steeper in the last three years because of the absence of the summer-long trips.

Klára's case is one of the most extreme in the study. Her husband, Ken, used to have a 9-month position and was able to take their daughter to the Czech Republic for seven summers in a row while Klára remained in the United States working. Ken stayed with Klára's mother for several months each time, taking their daughter to preschool, playdates, and learning Czech himself in the meantime. Although the daughter always spoke English to him, the preschool in the Czech Republic provided an environment where there were "only Czech children, only Czech people, there is no mom, no dad, anybody who can help her... we basically threw her in water" (Klára). Taking these regular trips had a strong positive effect on their daughter's Czech language development. Ken assessed, "I would not say she was... as good as a child raised in the Czech Republic... but... she was good!" However, when Ken was no longer able to go overseas for the whole summer, the girl quickly lost most of her proficiency over several years. Now, they go overseas only occasionally for a short time. The daughter understands only a simple Czech when spoken slowly, and it is very difficult for her to speak the language. However, Klára's son, who came to the United States in fourth grade, kept visiting his father in the Czech Republic every summer, and his skills in spoken Czech are quite strong still today. Klára claimed, "His communication is perfect. But when he is writing, he is writing like a fourth grader. He is making such *crazy...crazy* mistakes!" And that is because he went to a public school in the Czech Republic until grade four. His situation is similar to Jarmila and Juraj's son, who came to the United States at age 4.

Finally, a number of families could not afford to stay overseas for a longer period from the very beginning because both parents were working full time. Among these, Anděla traveled with her daughters most often, typically for a business trip every year for one to two weeks. Jarmila and Juraj go back to Slovakia about every two years for less than three weeks. Milada and Radka both live in a mixed-marriage family and work full time, which allows for a less than desirable exposure to the HL while in the United States and little vacation time to use for the trips. Radka admits that the visits overseas have not

been “as frequent as we would like.” However, both mothers found other ways to supplement the short trips and to boost HL language proficiency of their children.

Radka and Ron employed *au pairs* from Slavic countries, which provided a Slavic language environment and at the same time decreased the boys’ exposure to English, thus slowing down the inevitable shift to English (Fishman, 2001). Milada, however, sends her children to day care and travels overseas only every two years for two weeks. But she is the only parent able to bring her father over for as long as six months every other year to make sure that, “*every year* [the children] have exposure to Slovak language.” Having the grandfather stay with the boys for such a long period of time helps tremendously with their fluency, mainly because he does not speak or understand any English and therefore the boys simply have to use Slovak. Milada also dreams about taking the boys to Slovakia for the whole summer at some point in the future, as she sees the importance of this immersive experience for the children’s fluency. She observes that “every time [Grandpa] is here they improve, every time we go to Slovakia they improve, and then when he leaves or we come back... it [is] kind of... deteriorating.”

Summary of transnational trips. Transnational trips proved a very important strategy in HL maintenance. When used often and for long enough, the transnational trips provided a major boost in the fluency of the children in both types of families, although it is more prominent in the mixed-marriage families. By contrast, it was much harder to notice any improvement or development of the HL during the year while in the United States, where the children feel neither the peer pressure nor the need to use the language. The children were either too young to maintain written contact (such as through email or other social media) with relatives throughout the year, or they could not read and write in the HL. Thus, the time spent on these trips had the biggest effect on their HL development.

Still, a number of challenges made it impossible for all parents to travel overseas each year. In fact, only Lucie has been spending the summer in Slovakia every year, while a number of families had to

give up the annual trips over time. The parents who discontinued travelling overseas and did not compensate the absence of exposure by bringing grandparents over often described a sharp decline in their children's HL proficiency (Klára, Patrícia). Some families bring grandparents for long visits to the United States to create an HL-only environment in their home. For a summary see table 9:

Table 9. The use of transnational trips and grandparents' visits

Family's trips overseas	Grandparents come every 2 years for a longer time period	Grandparents come less often	Grandparents do not visit
Long visit every year		Lucie (<i>Diana-past</i>)	(<i>Klára, Patrícia-past</i>)
Short visit every year		Anděla	
Long v. every 2 years	Bohdana		
Short v. every 2 years	Milada, Diana	Radka, Jarmila	
Less often		Stanislav*, Helena**	Klára, Patrícia

* Stanislav has never taken his children overseas.

** Helena only took her son overseas two times for a short period.

This major importance of transnational trips for HL maintenance has not yet been acknowledged in the literature. While some studies document the use of travelling to the parental country of origin (Kondo, 1997; Nesteruk, 2010; Rong, 2005), the strategy has not been considered an essential tool for HL maintenance. It is likely that for small language groups without a community and/or a language school, these trips represent one of the few resources and thus are relied upon strongly. Still, the use of transnational trips does not explain all differences between families. In fact, children in some families (Jarmila, Radka) were able to reach a high degree of fluency without a major dependence on the transnational trips and grandparents. In these families, still other strategies were in place.

Friends From the Same Linguistic Background

Meeting with other Czech and Slovak families provided another form of exposure, both in all-immigrant and mixed-marriage families. Most parents would have welcomed a community but generally they were glad to just find a couple of other families. Only Stanislav and Anděla did not actively try to find other Czechs and Slovaks, and Anděla shared that still today they “don't know *anybody* who would

“speak Czech here.” All parents from the other nine families attempted to meet with other Czechs or Slovaks in the area, but they encountered various challenges in this effort.

Challenges. While Bohdana meets with a number of other Slovaks (the children’s Slovak godmother and godfather live nearby) and generally feels there are enough peers with whom her children can communicate in Slovak or in Czech, most other mothers complained about the shortage of people from their linguistic background in the area. For Patrícia, finding another Slovak family with children her daughter’s age proved difficult, and Klára and Ken, as well as Jarmila and Juraj, did not know anyone with children. Similarly, Radka saw the “lack of Czech-speaking people” in the area as a major problem. In addition, parents who managed to find a suitable family pointed out that, “the problem is that all the kids speak English!” (Milada). Generally, all children in this sample used only English when speaking to other children from Czech or Slovak immigrant families. Radka still sees some benefit to these encounters as she explains, “Children don’t speak Czech to each other, but I think it helps to hear the parents speak in Czech or Slovak.”

The only case where children actually spoke the HL among themselves was when two all-immigrant families of the same language background met, while their children were all younger than 5 years old. This would be the case of Bohdana’s family, for example, although as children grow older (at this time 7 and 4 years old), they are beginning to prefer English with their Slovak friends. This age has been described in literature (Fillmore, 1991; Nesteruk, 2010) as a turning point in the children’s language use. Around age 5, children begin using more English as a result of greater exposure to the language in school settings and perhaps also because of the perceived higher status of English.

There were two exceptions to this rule, Lucie and Jarmila. When Lucie met with one of her friends, the daughters of these two families actually used Slovak among themselves, even though they were older than 5 and from a mixed-marriage family, a situation not experienced or mentioned by

anyone else. Lucie credits her friend for bringing up her daughters to be fluent in Slovak and describes this other Slovak mother as follows: “She is *very good*, her kids *only speak Slovak*. So when we are with them and play tennis, they speak Slovak with them and that’s *great!!* So it really is mutual.”

The second exception was Jamila’s son who consistently uses Slovak with all other Slovak speakers. According to Jarmila, finding Slovak or Czech friends with children in the area “was the biggest problem (...) It would have been... simply ideal... but we didn’t have any. For... all the Slovak women we knew... were without children at that time.” When their son was little, Jarmila and Juraj would meet with these Czech and Slovak adults rather than with English-speaking American families with children. As a result, their son spent more time around adults than around children when growing up. And while Jarmila complained about the absence of other Slovak children, it is possible to assume that it might have had a positive effect on the HL use and maintenance in this case. Unlike most children of Czech and Slovak immigrants, the adults spoke only Slovak when they met with Juraj and Jarmila, providing an environment conducive to HL retention. This finding supports and elaborates on available research (Fillmore, 1991; Shin, 2002), showing that birth order of children affects their chances for HL maintenance. The older child enjoys more direct contact with the parents, the adults, who tend to use the HL consistently. However, a younger sibling is exposed to more English early on through his or her older sibling. In Jarmila’s case, the son was exposed only to the parents, who were both Slovak. Today, he is able to understand both Czech and Slovak.

Wishing for a community school. Many parents wished they had a community not only to allow for a more language exposure but also to enable founding of a community language school, where children might learn some basic literacy skills in Czech and/or Slovak. Originally, Diana wanted to establish a language school herself. Milada and Diana both expressed a desire for organized Slovak celebrations and traditional events, and Mark would opt for a Slovak preschool if such an option existed.

Juraj is convinced that HL is “first and foremost... a question of the family.” However, he explains the importance of a community of Slovak speakers for the child as demonstration that, “the language... is applicable even beyond the family use, perhaps.” A number of parents mentioned successful examples of other ethnic groups in the area. Ken listed a Chinese Saturday school, a Russian school, Arabic, and German: “I mean most of the major languages... they have... weekend school...” Similarly, Diana shared:

It would be good if we had an established community here... like for example the Chinese have. They have a Chinese school, basically they have every Saturday... they teach the kids... And then Kinder... Carolina Kinder is another one... the Germans (...) and I would *like* if... if there were more [Slovak] people who are *involved* like this, you know? Like... that was sort of our plan... that we would make such a school happen and all... but not enough people were interested, who would join me and volunteer? (Diana)

Milada mentioned a case in Washington, DC, where several Slovak parents decided to take turns looking after all children, and as she reported that “... those kids speak purely Slovak there! (...) It’s awesome!” With the limited numbers of Czechs and Slovaks in the southeastern United States, an organized community was simply not an option for these parents, much less a functional language school. In addition, Mark expressed his doubts about the effects of a potential community school:

Even if you get Slovak kids together...the kids would still speak the language they know best... which might be English. Ah... and the same thing with the Slovak day care... there is no guarantee, that... they wouldn’t speak English! (Mark)

Summary of friends from the same linguistic background. Meeting with other Czech and Slovak families in order to practice the HL proved to present a number of challenges. First, the options were scarce and not everyone was able to find another family with children. Second, the children were not always in a similar age range to allow for actual play dates. Third, most children preferred speaking English among themselves, which proved most disappointing to the parents. While many parents were able to find at least some Czech- or Slovak-speaking people nearby, all children from the mixed-marriage families, except Lucie, used English in all their interactions with other children. Among the all-immigrant

families, the only time children used the HL with others was when all of the following applied: 1) all children came from all-immigrant families and were fluent in the HL, 2) they were all 5 years old or younger, and 3) their linguistic background was the same (either both families Czech or both Slovak). This was previously the case of Bohdana and Diana. Today, however, their children use increasingly more English with all peers. The only exception was Jarmila, perhaps because her son grew up around adults more than around peers. Table 10 illustrates the differences across families.

Table 10. Meeting friends from the same linguistic background

	<i>Children speak English</i>	<i>Children speak the HL</i>
<i>Know nobody else CZ or SK</i>	(Klára-past), Anděla, Stanislav	
<i>Meet CZ or SK adults only</i>		Jarmila
<i>Meet 1-2 families with children</i>	Klára, Diana, Patrícia, Radka, Milada, Helena	(Diana-past)
<i>Meet more families with children</i>		Lucie*, Bohdana**

* Lucie's children speak Slovak only with one particular family; with the rest they also use English.

** Bohdana's children speak the HL with other *young* children, shifting more and more to English.

These findings complicate current literature by suggesting that interaction with peers of the same linguistic background does not necessarily lead to the *use* of the HL. While most parents would welcome more Czech or Slovak friends to meet with, they also recognize that the impact of this strategy on their children's HL development is rather limited. Helena, for example, meets with a number of Czech and Slovak families, but the effect on her son's Czech is negligible. While the existence of a larger ethnic community might help HL retention (Fishman, 1991; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), simply meeting people of the same linguistic background does not provide sufficient stimulus for the children to use the HL.

It is possible to hypothesize that meeting fellow countrymen has a positive impact on HL maintenance only in cases where the dominant language of all involved is the HL, or – in other words – when these people do not understand English well. However, this was not the case for any family in this sample. Therefore, parents rely on other more dependable strategies of HL maintenance, strategies that *require* children to use the HL, such as taking transnational trips or bringing in grandparents.

Other Sources of Exposure: Books, Movies, Skype, and More

The last method of increasing the exposure to the HL included reading books in the HL to the children and utilizing multimedia sources, such as movies, songs, and the Internet. In addition, a number of families used phone calls and Skype to let children speak to the grandparents regularly. Radka often pretended not to know an answer to some of her children's questions and used this opportunity to call her relatives in the Czech Republic immediately to have them speak to the children. While both mixed and all-immigrant families used many of these strategies often, they also reported certain challenges.

Scarcity of resources, mainly in the Slovak language. One of the challenges was simply finding enough adequate age-appropriate sources. Helena would like to see more foreign-language books in the public library, and mainly she would like schools to provide a greater global awareness to the students, which would validate other languages as something important or at least relevant to the children's lives. Generally, all resources must be brought from overseas. Lance noted that the family does not have enough up-to-date movies in Slovak for their older daughter to watch any more.

Watching Czech or Slovak fairy tales and movies is one of the activities more welcomed by the children as it was easier for them to understand the plot with a visual guidance. While resources in Czech are more readily available, the general scarcity of resources in Slovak is the reason children in a number of Slovak families also understand some Czech. Lucie, who is Slovak, commented, "Yeah, there were some movies in Czech so that's why [the children] understand [Czech] (...) *Of course* they don't understand everything." And Lance added:

I always ask them when we are watching a Czech movie...: 'You understand what they are saying?' And [the older daughter] says 'Yeah, I understand what they are saying,' and [the younger daughter] said: 'Not all of it, but yeah, I know what they are saying.' (Lance)

Similarly, Milada shared that "now [my children] respond to Czech... because Mickey Mouse is not [available] in Slovak!" Apparently, as Milada complained:

“it’s really hard to... find any... book in Slovak, it’s really hard to find any game in Slovak, it’s really hard to find any ...DVDs or... you know *anything* in Slovak. (...) I mean I was trying to Google something in Slovak and *everything, everything* [was in] Czech.”

As mentioned earlier, Jarmila’s son also understands some Czech in addition to his family’s HL, Slovak. It is interesting to note that during interviews, none of the Czech participants mentioned that their children watched anything in Slovak or understood Slovak at all. Rather, they had enough trouble mastering just Czech. In the former Czechoslovakia, Czech was the language of the majority population of Bohemia, while Slovak was spoken by about a half the population in the eastern region of the federation. As a result, the majority of older TV programs as well as cartoons and movies that are available online, were produced in Czech. Any newer programs, produced in the current-day Czech Republic and Slovakia are not always readily available on YouTube or elsewhere on the web.

In addition, the programs for children that are available on the Internet are typically very short and parents have to be present constantly in order to select the next story: “because you have one... story per every five minutes” (Milada). Furthermore, finding appropriate content in Czech or Slovak on YouTube constitutes a problem for the English-speaking parent. Mark shared he would really appreciate a YouTube channel for children in Slovak that is “kid-appropriate.”

Because I don’t speak Slovak, you know, and you know how the Internet works... you can’t just assume that since it says ‘Mickey Mouse in Slovak’ that it’s appropriate for the children. (Mark)

Children’s insufficient vocabulary. Besides the general scarcity of resources, another major challenge was the fact that children did not always understand the vocabulary in the books (or even movies) that were read to them. Patrícia, for example, attempted reading Slovak fairy tales to her daughter as a strategy of HL exposure. She not only found that the stories did not sound interesting to her daughter, who has become more used to the American culture and the Disney-style fairy tales, but Patrícia also found that her daughter could not understand all the vocabulary in the books, making the

leisure activity difficult and frustrating for both of them. As a solution, Patrícia brought Slovak translations of Disney stories from Slovakia and uses these books to read to her daughter in Slovak. Although the issue of insufficient vocabulary in the HL is more typical for mixed-marriage families, both Anděla and Diana, from all-immigrant families, experienced a similar situation. Anděla stated:

Like they sometimes watch Czech stuff, and even if they don't understand everything... they still know what's it about... or sometimes I stop the movie and explain... what was said or what happened, and... so (...) they understand... but not every word (...) like they don't have the vocabulary. (Anděla)

When Anděla reads a book in Czech to her daughters, she either has to translate multiple words into English or just keep on reading hoping the girls would get some sense of the story in the end. She shared, "It's kind of difficult because it is always a couple of sentences and then [they say]: 'I don't know what that is...' and then every other word (...) you know?" Similar to Patrícia's case, these girls do not have a vocabulary large enough to be able to understand age-appropriate books in Czech.

For Diana's children it is at times difficult to understand a Slovak book, especially if it uses expressions that are never used in the family setting or if it is written in a regional dialect. Diana goes a long way to provide Slovak exposure to her children; she takes an English book and "reads" it to her children in Slovak: "You know, I simply read it to myself, quickly translate, and say it [in Slovak]." But she notes that her efforts at using only Slovak with the children are being challenged, because the children now pick what they would like her to read to them, and it is typically an English book. "They simply know what is easier for them to understand," Diana admits and remembers that the children have even asked her to "read" them a Slovak book *in English*. It begins to be a battle with the children not only to make them actively use the language but also about their very willingness to listen to a book in Slovak, which is rather disappointing for Diana.

Reading to the children seems to work for Milada and Radka, although they are both from mixed-marriage families and the children have always been dominant in English. This might be possible because the children are still young and the books and cartoons they use are self-evident. In addition, Milada simply *does not* read in English to the children. She shares, “If I say I am reading, [my son] knows that he cannot bring me [an] English book. And he goes and finds a Slovak book. Or a Czech book.” And Mark added: “Yeah, and he always brings me English ones.” Milada is determined not to read in English as her time with the children during the week is limited (because of her full-time job) and she wants to use it all for Slovak. She gave an example of how she handles children’s preferences in terms of the language. To their requests for a non-Slovak book she answers:

‘You don’t wanna read a Slovak book? Fine, there is a bedtime right now!’ And they just don’t wanna go to bed! So... ah... they just... kind of learned that with me they have to... read Slovak books and that’s it! That’s all!

Summary of other sources of exposure. All but three families (Stanislav, Helena, Klára) are currently using at least some of the strategies described above. While movies are generally easier for the children to understand, reading books in the HL constitute a large problem. Having to explain words or simplify the story is frustrating for both sides and further discourages some parents from attempting to read to their children in the HL, see table 11.

Table 11. Using other forms of exposure to HL

	Children understand movies and books	Children do not understand movies and books well*
All-immigrant	Jarmila, Bohdana	Anděla, Diana
Mixed marriage	Lucie, Milada, Radka	(Klára-past), Patrícia

* Helena and Stanislav have not used any of these strategies. Klára does not use any of these strategies at present.

The two major challenges in using these additional strategies of HL maintenance were 1) the scarcity of resources available in the HL, mainly in Slovak, and 2) the children’s insufficient vocabulary to allow for using such resources. The scarcity of resources might not be the case in some locations, such

as Texas or Nebraska for Czechs and Pennsylvania for Slovaks. Some of these places have communities, ethnic clubhouses, and language classes (Dutkova-Cope, 2006). However, in states with no prior history of Czech and Slovak settlement, these resources are missing entirely.

The second major challenge, the children's vocabulary in the HL, suggests that these strategies might be a great resource for families where children reach certain level of fluency, but they might become a source of discouragement in families where the children's understanding of the language is lower. It is a challenge to accommodate both the child's language level and age-appropriate interests, because an older child will not listen to a story written for a younger audience even though it might be at the right level of the child's HL proficiency. As some scholars have argued (Randolph, 2011; Kagan, 2005; Valdés, 2005), learning an HL requires different resources and approaches than a traditional foreign language instruction can offer. My findings also suggest that the instruction and resources for HL learners need to be different from those used for native speakers. While some parents brought the Czech or Slovak Primer, their children learn the language differently from an average child in the Czech Republic or Slovakia. More appropriate HL resources could be developed by language experts and made available through the consulates of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the United States.

Conclusion

Sufficient exposure to the HL, or language input, is noted in the literature as the core factor for HL maintenance (Baker, 2011; Nesteruk, 2010; Tse, 2001b). This chapter examined the methods parents used to provide sufficient exposure to the HL. The strategies included mainly 1) parental use of the HL, 2) taking transnational trips and bringing grandparents to visit with the family, 3) finding friends of the same linguistic background for play dates, and 4) other strategies for additional exposure to the HL, such as using books, the Internet, movies, and songs in the HL, or telephone or Skype calls with grandparents

and family overseas. In table 12, families are ranked based on the reported proficiency of the children, with Jarmila's son being the most fluent and Stanislav's children knowing no Czech at all.

Table 12. Summary of providing exposure

	All-immigrant	Parents use the HL	Parent stayed at home	Trips to CZ/ SK	Grand-parents visit U.S.	CZ/SK friends	Books, movies, Internet
Jarmila	XX	XX	XX	X		XX	X
Bohdana	XX	XX	X	X	XX	XX	X
Diana	XX	XX	X	X	XX	X (XX)	X
Lucie		XX	X	XX		XX	X
Milada		XX		X	XX	X	X
Radka		XX	*	X		X	X
Anděla	XX	X (XX)	X	X			X
Patrícia		X (XX)	X	(XX)		X	X
Klára		(XX)	X	(XX)		X	(X)
Helena	XX	(XX)	**			X	
Stanislav							

XX Factors strongly present

X Factors partially present

(X), (XX) Factors present in the past

* Radka's family used *au pairs* from Slavic countries instead of a full-day day care.

** Helena stayed home only for two years then she assumed a full-time job.

Home language use (including family composition) and travel overseas constitute the two major and most dependable sources of HL exposure for these children. However, it is evident that no single strategy warrants positive results at all times. Families with more-proficient children have used and are currently using more strategies overall.

While home use of the HL by the parents is crucial, it does not always result in high levels of proficiency, especially in mixed-marriage families (Patrícia), if not supplemented by other strategies. Similarly, while family composition is an important factor, growing up in a mixed marriage does not preclude children in some of these children (Lucie, and to a degree also Radka and Milada) from acquiring a great degree of fluency, provided there are enough strategies for HL exposure in place. On the other hand, being born in an all-immigrant family does not guarantee any particular amount of HL proficiency in the children. Helena's son, for example, does not speak Czech at all and Anděla's

daughters are by no means fluent in Czech. Both these families prioritized English over the HL and generally used fewer strategies to develop their children's HL proficiency.

The most valued strategy for HL maintenance was taking children for frequent and lengthy trips overseas, often complemented with long-term visits by grandparents to the United States. Still, in some families it was possible to achieve a great degree of fluency without major dependence on such crucial strategies as transnational trips and grandparents (Jarmila). Altogether, these results suggest that simple variables, such as family composition, the choice of day care, or even the frequency of visits overseas, cannot explain or predict HL proficiency in the children. Unfortunately, most large-scale studies depend precisely on these variables to offer an "insight" into processes of HL maintenance and loss. Therefore, qualitative studies are needed to describe and understand the conditions conducive to HL maintenance.

One important aspect in HL retention proved to be age of children. Bohdana's children, for example, are still quite young and their command of the HL is still quite strong. In comparison, Diana's practices are very similar to Bohdana's, but her children are a few years older and use more English than Bohdana's children. Most parents reported the children's tendency to use more English at home over time. Some parents also shared that even for them using the HL became more difficult as the children grew older and the discussions became more sophisticated and/or academic. In addition, the transnational trips are more difficult to organize as children age, because of time constraints, lodging, and expenses. Thus, while available literature (Fillmore, 1991; Nesteruk, 2010) suggests that the children's shift towards English is mainly a result of their enrollment in a full day care or an elementary school, my findings show that parents may also play a part in this shift by changing their language practices over time. The question of children's language preferences, as experienced by the parents, is discussed specifically in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Parental Efforts to Make Children Use and Learn the Heritage Language

This study as well as available literature (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) show, that children of immigrants come to prefer English to the HL with age even if the HL is used in the immigrant homes. A major change happens around age 5 years (Fillmore, 1991; Kouritzin, 1999) when the children enter kindergarten. These findings document the strong assimilatory forces of U.S. schooling. As soon as the child steps out of the more sheltered home environment and enters a public institution, English often becomes the language of his or her choice for all communication, including communication with parents. All parents (except Stanislav and Jarmila) reported the children's growing tendency to use English at home instead of the HL. In response, most parents made efforts to slow this shift towards English by encouraging fluency (some more gently while others more firmly), pursuing literacy, and nurturing motivation. These parental practices could be understood as on a continuum between strong resolve to help children learn and use the HL and a partial or full resignation at such efforts. In most cases, the children's reaction to parental efforts (in the form of conformity or resistance) was decisive for whether the parents would continue (or not) to pursue HL teaching at home.

Encouraging HL Use and Fluency

Children's language preferences in language use represent a much-discussed theme in this study, suggesting an active role of the children in determining the ways in which language practices within families develop, also documented by Tuominen (1999). This section demonstrates how parents dealt with children's language preferences and their gradual shift to English, discussing first all-immigrant families and then mixed-marriage families.

All-immigrant families. In all-immigrant families, where parents used the HL exclusively at home, children learned the language and became fluent in early age (0-5 years old). It was the first language they spoke and they used it even with their siblings early on. Children in all-immigrant families learned the two languages in a process of sequential bilingualism (Baker, 2011), the second language after having mastered the first. Depending on the amount and the timing of their exposure to English, the children began shifting towards English sooner or later. Today, children in two of the traditional immigrant families are clearly dominant in English, and their command of the HL is much poorer. Helena's son stopped using and being responsive to Czech when he entered a full day care at age 2, and Helena switched entirely to English. Anděla encouraged English language development over Czech, resulting in an earlier shift away from the HL, such as around age 3. Both Anděla's daughters still speak some Czech, although they use many English words in their sentences. In these two cases parents did not actively fight against the shift, because they prioritized English. Helena even perceived a strong focus on the HL as a possible hindrance to a smooth English language development.

Jarmila, on the other hand, made major efforts to teach Slovak to her son and to use it with him consistently. However, she never tried to persuade or force the child to speak Slovak with the parents, neither would she do so in case he did not speak Slovak. In fact, Jarmila shared with a bit of amazement:

I actually think he is... stricter than we are... for we sometimes mix Slovak and English. And he indeed discerns that we are Slovaks, and speaks always Slovak to us. (...) But in case someone comes over for a visit, like an English-speaking person... he starts speaking English. (Jarmila)

Jarmila's son uses only Slovak with his parents, and is quite fluent, because of the many strategies they used. Still, even this child is dominant in English. Jarmila noted that English is for her son like Slovak is for her, meaning a native and a stronger language. All other children in this study use some English when speaking to their parents, and the amount of English is increasing in time, unless a major boost in the HL fluency is present, such as during and soon after a trip to the Czech Republic or Slovakia.

The children in two all-immigrant families (Diana and Bohdana) find themselves in the midst of the transition from the HL to English. Both mothers try to encourage or reinforce the use of Slovak at home to a different degree, but not always successfully. In both families, the older child spoke Slovak fluently at home until about age 5 or 6, although both mothers had been sending their children to half-day preschool in English. Both Diana and Bohdana observed that with time their children began using more English and less Slovak, even though the parents' practices didn't change. Diana states:

They speak Slovak with me but I feel like... the older they are the more they answer to me in English. Or between themselves... they are beginning to speak more... English (...) and I am like... I am telling [them] 'Poslovensky! Ja nerozmiem!' [In Slovak! I don't understand you!] But it doesn't work any more for they know that I understand, you know? (Diana)

According to Diana, children pick the easier language, one that comes faster. And she feels that "English is a simple language. It's easier to say: 'Pass me the ball' than 'Hod mi loptu, maminka'" (Diana). While the mother is disappointed with the children's preference for English, inserting more and more English expressions does not necessarily cause misunderstandings with parents who speak English well. However, it does lead to misapprehension between the children and grandparents. While children are able to understand their grandparents, the grandparents do not necessarily understand the children.

[My children] are now used to putting American expressions into their Slovak sentences! You know, and grandma comes and [my son] says something... like: 'Starka podme na *pool*.' Well, but grandma doesn't know what a *pool* is! [And she asks] 'Where does he want to go to'? (Diana)

Furthermore, when the subject is more complicated, such as when the children are to describe something in Slovak, it becomes too hard for them altogether. Diana shared an example:

[My older son, 9] already has troubles explaining what happened in school... you know? Yesterday, he was telling me that... 'we played a game, and we tied a bottle onto a string and then we had to swing it...' and he *cannot do it*! He is simply not able to say it in Slovak! (...) He can say *string*, *rope*, he tells me everything possible, he tells me ten expressions in English but he wouldn't recall that we say *povrazok*, *snurka*, *lano*, *lanko*... You know? Because I don't use those words much. You now, I say *snurka*... well, how many times you can use *snurka*? (...) well, and [my son] got upset! (Diana)

Bohdana experienced a similar situation, in which her children had problems expressing themselves in Slovak. She realizes it must be difficult for them to recall more specific vocabulary:

Poor thing... like he... you know... they remain frustrated that they cannot say it! (...) They start... they want to say something, they have it in their head... what they are gonna tell you... and they can't say it in Slovak! (...) And they give it up. And then they don't even want to say it in English! (Bohdana)

Finding suitable words in Slovak to describe their school activities is becoming more and more difficult for the children in all-immigrant families, which further discourages them, and they eventually give up the attempt altogether. The two mothers react differently, with Diana pressing harder for children to try to use Slovak. Diana listens to the child's description in English; and then she translates it for him into Slovak. But she sees that even this effort does not change much:

I am already seeing that their vocabulary goes [away]... like you know... within the family you only use certain expressions again and again. I... I don't talk with them about chemistry, about biology... about math... like addition, subtraction, you know? (Diana)

Bohdana, on the other hand, is not pressing on the children to use Slovak-only at this point, realizing they need English to succeed in school. She also observes that her younger son tends to use English earlier than the firstborn. While her older son (7) still speaks mostly Slovak at home, she reflects:

With the younger one, the situation is quite different. If you would listen to them you would hear them speak English between themselves at home. (...) Or [the younger] would start talking to me in English. But I leave it as it is because... I see that he would need it later in school (...). So when he starts in English... I let him do that... yeah. But no... I don't try to press like: 'Don't talk in English... use Slovak!' ...not like that. (Bohdana)

Other parents also noted that their younger child tends to use more English than the older used at a similar age. Milada, Klára, and Lucie all observed this pattern, supporting the established literature (Fillmore, 1991; Shin, 2002). Altogether, all-immigrant families experienced early HL development in their children (if supported at home) with a subsequent recession of the language and replacement with English. The child still using the HL at home (Jarmila's) is a specific case because he was born in Slovakia.

Mixed-marriage families. The situation in mixed-marriage families was quite different because all these children have always been strongly dominant in English. While all the mothers started speaking the HL to the children when they were born, most children have in fact never been fluent in the HL. For most mothers, making the children actively use the HL has been a battle from the very beginning as the children were exposed both to English and the HL at the same time, in a process of simultaneous bilingualism (Baker, 2011). Since English was the more dominant language and the HL simply just the “language of the mother,” children came learn English much easier. English has always been the language used between siblings, with very rare exceptions, such as during a prolonged visit overseas.

In the process of battling the dominance of English, Klára and Patrícia gave up their goals and accepted the fact that the children might never be able to use the HL in the future. Milada and Radka find themselves in the midst of the battle over the HL, still holding onto their dreams, and Lucie seems to have figured out a way to keep the Slovak language alive for her daughters.

A successful battle. Although Lucie’s daughters use mostly English with her in the United States, they always start speaking Slovak during the summer vacation in Slovakia and keep using the HL perhaps another month upon their return to the United States. Although Lucie stayed home with the girls when they were small and spoke only Slovak to them, it was in fact *in Slovakia* where the girls started actually speaking Slovak, further affirming the importance of these transnational visits:

Lance: Lucie would always speak to them in Slovak but they would never really speak Slovak. They would always speak *English*. But they *understood* Slovak. And so that first year... when she took them back... and I don’t remember... [the older daughter] may have been three or four... something like that. And [the younger daughter] was two, maybe. Ahm... when they got there ...ahm... it was like a light sw... flipping a light switch. And they... were just speaking... Slovak, right? And so... and then when... they came back here... ah... it *took a while* for them to start speaking English again. (...) Whereas like... the last two years... it’s *nothing*. They go back and forth like that. You know, easily. I mean just *fluently*. But like for the first year I mean... like for *a week or two* they kept speaking Slovak at home [when back in the United States].

Lucie: And it was like ‘How do you say this in English?’ [laughing]

Lance: Yeah. They forgot, you know? And... it was kind of funny... you know.

Lucie: But it's funny... Every year, when we come back, and... at the beginning they answer in Slovak. And then it's... the longer they are *here* they're starting... I speak Slovak and they respond in English [laughing]. And I am like: 'Slovak, speak Slovak!' (...) The more, more, more you are here, the more... they just [speak English]... But it's *in there*. I know now they are at the stage when it's in there. And so when... you know... they need to... they just switch.

Other than making sure the family travels to Slovakia each summer for two months, Lucie does not pressure the girls to respond and speak in Slovak, and it seems to work. The yearly boost in HL exposure helps the girls improve and solidify their spoken Slovak and interrupt their shift to English.

In the midst of a battle. The children of Milada and Radka are younger than any other mixed-marriage children, and both mothers work full time. Having less time to spend with their children during the week, they decided to actively encourage the children to use the language. In both families, the children use a mixture of English and the HL, or sometimes they respond in the HL and other times in English. Radka notes, "They respond in Czech; however, many times, English nouns and verbs come to their mind before Czech equivalents, so even though they use Czech sentence structure, a number of words are in English." Her typical response to such situation is to pick the most important word and introduce the Czech equivalent for the children, not trying to "fix" all the errors in that sentence. For Radka's children, one of the major boosts in fluency was provided by a Czech *au pair*. "The Czech *au pair* probably had the greatest influence on our sons, especially on our younger son, as he was with her a lot while his older brother was in kindergarten for most of the day." As a result, Radka even noticed that her younger son would start speaking in Czech to his brother several times. This was typically a situation when the mother was obviously involved, and the child was perhaps trying to prove himself, Radka suggested. While it is very untypical for a younger sibling to use more HL, in this case it is explained by the increased exposure to the Czech language thanks to the *au pair*.

Milada also observes large swings in the children's fluency depending on the amount of exposure to Slovak. While after a trip overseas or time with grandpa in the house it seems easier for the children to respond in Slovak, she remembers having to put a strong pressure on the older son to make him respond to her in Slovak at other times. Now, Milada says, the older son "finally got into the point that he responds Slovak to me (...) Because I was *forcing* him to do that!" Still, she says, when

there is something that he wants to tell me and... it's a pretty complex topic, then he would still use English... [to] try to describe it as fast as he can. But if I say 'I am not gonna listen to you until you start Slovak' ...then he... he'll respond. (Milada)

Altogether, she estimates that the older son uses Slovak about 70% of the time he speaks to her, as opposed to his younger brother, who uses Slovak probably only 30% of the time when speaking directly to the mother. At other times with other people, they both use English. Milada explained the difference and pointed out the need to put pressure on the children:

Well, that's been issue with [the older son]... and now it's issue with [the younger son] (...) When [grandpa] was here I think [the younger] was... two to three... somewhere there and he was just picking up ...really a language... so.... and he was... pretty much... half time... more than half time home with [grandpa]. (...) So he... he spent a lot of time with him and he really *talked* to him... so he picked up a lot of Slovak and he was responding to me in Slovak. We went to Slovakia pretty much right afterwards and... you know... there was an even more... We came back and he was *slowly* losing it and... he was slow... like I cannot almost force him to respond [now]. He would respond if I say, 'Well, I am not giving you milk unless you say it in Slovak' but... it's... he automatically responds in... in English. And then I say, 'What?... What's that?' And then he responds in Slovak. (Milada)

While the children in both families use some HL in their daily interactions with their mothers, describing something more complicated is very challenging, much more than for Diana's and Bohdana's children. Milada shares:

[When the children] talk about a new topic... [one] they have never talked about [in Slovak], it's really hard for them. (...) It would be so *frustrating* for him that I *let him* switch back to English (...) then I say it in Slovak and he *repeats* it in Slovak so that way he... at least learns something... but ahm... (...) It's a lot of head butting or whatever you call it.

This involves sharing an experience from school using Slovak, for example. Radka also tries to make the children say as much as they can in Czech, offering clues, suggesting words, and helping them along the way, however, she does not refuse to respond to their requests in English.

The main reason behind the children's difficulties to express themselves in the HL, according to parents, was the context in which the event took place and subsequently the vocabulary and concepts (or lack thereof) available to the children in each language. As Mark noted, "For any of us... to explain something in words other than in which we learned it... it's hard!" Milada agrees,

It's really fun, because if we would learn something *before* they would learn it at school... like we were learning about Jamestown and pirate ships... they *know that subject better in Slovak*. So when they have to... (...) go and explain to their grandma, that... she speaks English [Mark's mother]... it would be hard. And actually, in Slovakia that happened multiple times! Because we were learning about Spišský hrad [Spiš Castle]! Well, everything that they have learned about Spišský hrad was *at* the Spišský Hrad, or from me or from books or from... and *everything was in Slovak*! So when they were... when we had my in-laws in Slovakia, and [the kids] would try to tell them about Spišský hrad, they would use a *lot of Slovak words* in that explanation because that's how they've learned [it]! (Milada)

The same logic goes the other way around, and is much more common among the children: When they learn something at school they know it *in English*. Mark observed, "Whatever language they learn it in... it's the language they... discuss it in." As such, it is difficult for Milada and other mothers to have a conversation with their children about school experiences in the HL. Many parents in this study just give up and let the children speak English. Milada, however, does not let anything go, although it requires quite a bit of effort for both her and the children. She shares some of the challenges:

Now, they are learning about planets at school, they can name all nine planets, but... if I am gonna ask them in Slovak... I mean they *cannot name them because they have never heard that!* So first we have to go over that in... kind of... they tell me in English and I tell them in Slovak and then we have to go over that multiple times in Slovak... before they even understand what... you know... we are trying to do! (Milada)

Both Milada and Radka put a lot of effort into making their children use the HL, still hoping they would not lose the battle entirely. Their focus on the children's active usage of the HL makes sense for a

number of reasons. First, the mothers work full time and cannot afford spending two months at a time overseas (although they would have liked to do so). Therefore, they have to use other strategies to make their children use the HL, such as encouragement or pressure. Second, their children are still quite young and school-related discussions are not overly academic, and thus possible in the HL. Third, young children tend to oblige to their parents while older children are more likely to rebel and not use the HL.

Battles lost or given up. Two mothers in mixed-marriage families with older children broke away – more or less – from their goals. Klára and Patrícia both stayed at home at least three years with the children but encountered challenges that caused them to give up their hopes. They recognized their efforts in HL maintenance as futile or even impossible.

Patrícia's daughter (8) used a mixture of Slovak and English when she was younger. When she started preschool at about age 3, "that's when it changed... and she started speaking mostly English." Today, the daughter speaks mainly in English although Patrícia keeps using as much Slovak around her as possible. Patrícia does require her daughter to answer in Slovak as she feels it is not in her nature to force her child. When the girl starts speaking in Slovak, it is to seek praise from the mother or express a sense of belonging. In such cases, the sentence structure is English and the words Slovak.

When she decides to speak Slovak... then she would say the whole sentence. However... typically... the discussion then gets stuck and then we move into English. But sometimes, she attempts speaking Slovak to me... which always pleases me. (Patrícia).

Patrícia came to realize that even if she were consistent in her own use of the Slovak language with her daughter, it would still not lead to the daughter's fluency in the HL. She sees that the child's vocabulary needs to expand over time but it is not in her power to bring in such language exposure. She observes that the development of her daughter's vocabulary "stopped" at a certain point:

Because we speak Slovak... literally only *in the kitchen*, you know? Thus (...) she doesn't talk about [things like] rocks or history... we simply don't discuss these things at home... in Slovak.

And if we did discuss such a subject it would be probably something school related, or church related... and thus it would be in English.

Lastly, Klára represents the most radical case. She shared her experience with her daughter (14):

“I was home and I was speaking Czech-only with her. And she was responding Czech.” Then, she recalls, at age 3 or 4, at the time she started a short-day preschool,

it started slowly vanishing and vanishing. And it was *hard to make her* speak Czech with me because I was the only source. Other than me, there was a TV in English, daddy in English, brother in English, all relatives in English... *everything* was English. So I was the only source and.... it was impossible to... hold on to it. (Klára)

Klára remembers this age as “the time when [her daughter] completely stopped [speaking Czech].” Klára observed, like most other participants but perhaps most clearly, how English slowly became the dominant means of communication and then soon replaced the HL in communication with parents entirely. In the end, Klára not only let her daughter use English, but she herself also began speaking English to her daughter. She described the dilemma of whether to force her child to speak Czech at the expense of the quality of their relationship:

I was making her [speak in Czech]: ‘Okay, you need to tell me that in *Czech*, because you speak Czech with me!’ [And] she said, ‘Okay, that’s fine, mom.’ [And then I said:] ‘So... so *tell me!*’ ‘Oh.... it was not important.’ *And I was losing her!!!* She would rather not tell me what happened in school than tell me it in Czech! So she was... *avoiding* the conversation. And I was like... *I have to know* what happened at school! I have to *know her stories!* So... it... was gone.

Both Patrícia and Klára gave up some of their battles. While Klára switched into English entirely herself and no one in the family currently speaks Czech, Patrícia still keeps using Slovak when speaking to her daughter, unless discussing school-related material or in other “specifically American” situations. In both cases, the daughters use only English and the mothers do not actively encourage them to speak the HL. These two families have two things in common. First, they both discontinued the visits overseas; Klára’s daughter stopped going to the Czech Republic with her dad about six years ago, and Patrícia’s daughter last visited Slovakia three years ago. Second, grandparents do not visit the United States.

Summary of fluency. Supporting the well-established literature on language shift and language loss (Fishman, 1991; Tse, 2001b) my findings show that in all families, both all-immigrant and mixed, a language shift towards English indeed happened earlier or later. Generally, the shift happens earlier and faster in mixed-marriage families. In all-immigrant families, the children typically speak the HL early on and begin to prefer English around age 5, confirming that the beginning of school attendance has a major effect on children's languages (Kouritzin, 1999). Some families are able to slow the process and thus prolong the time of HL dominancy. However, they also realize that English is important for their children to know and often allow the kids to put their new knowledge to use and practice English.

In mixed-marriage families, however, the children were always more fluent in English than in the HL. All the immigrant mothers in mixed families (but not the immigrant father, Stanislav) fought hard to make their children respond in the HL, at least initially. However, only a major effort and perseverance can slow this shift and lead to HL maintenance in mixed-marriage families. Table 13 summarizes parental strategies used to counter the children's language shift towards English.

Table 13. Summary of fluency

	<i>Encourage HL</i>	<i>Mild pressure</i>	<i>Strong pressure</i>	<i>All-immigrant</i>
<i>Jarmila</i>	X			X
<i>Lucie</i>	X			
<i>Bohdana</i>	X			X
<i>Diana</i>	X	X		X
<i>Anděla</i>	X			X
<i>Radka</i>	X	X		
<i>Milada</i>	X	X	X	
<i>Patrícia</i>	X			
<i>Klára</i>	(X)	(X)	(X)	
<i>Helena</i>	(X)			X
<i>Stanislav</i>				X

X A strategy currently used

(X) A strategy used only in the past only

This study also reveals some important findings that complicate and contradict our current understanding of language shift and loss among immigrants. First, many parents faced a dilemma of

how much to insist on their children's active usage of the HL. In all families, parents realized that too much pressure might eventually have an adverse effect, as the children would refuse to communicate with the parents altogether. In many cases, the parents simply could not *make* the children use the HL, allowing their children to use English instead. If they had insisted on the HL use, the child would simply not talk to them. Diana, Bohdana, and most prominently Klára expressed that the children would rather *not share* their stories with the parents than trying to explain it in the HL.

Literature on HL loss in immigrants warns that when children lose the ability to use the HL, communication between parents and children might be endangered or even disrupted entirely (Carreon et al., 2005; Kouritzin, 1999; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). Although this may well be the case in families where parents speak very little or no English, it is certainly not the case in this study. In fact, parents suggested quite the opposite solution to the problem of maintaining an open communication between themselves and their children. They let children use English *in order to maintain a communication* with their children. Since all the parents were quite proficient in English, the children did not *need* the HL for fluent communication with them. In fact, it was English rather than the HL that served as a means of keeping communication alive between parents and children. Misunderstandings, however, happened between the children and their grandparents, or any other person not proficient in English. Some children were not able to express themselves clearly, and others did not understand the language when spoken to them. While the parents' English proficiency may have prevented major misunderstandings between parents and children, it is possible that it may have also been one of the main reasons for children's rapid shift to English.

Second, it is important to note that in the mixed-marriage families, the HL is *not* the *natural* language for the child. Instead, the children are always dominant in English, and speaking the HL requires a major effort from them. This finding is important in that it points to an assumption much of

the literature on heritage languages holds. Literature on language loss and attrition (Fishman, 1991; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) is mostly based on research with all-immigrant families. It often assumes that children of immigrants learn the language of their parents at a young age, and then – in a process of assimilation into the majority society – this HL is lost. My study illustrates clearly that it is not be the case in mixed-marriage families. Many of these children are never truly fluent in their parents' language and thus they simply have "nothing to lose" or "little to maintain." Thus, I suggest that the emphasis should be put on *learning* the language, rather than on *preventing the loss* of the HL.

Third, elaborating on the previous point, the term language "maintenance" suggests a kind of conservation of language skills that are already in place. Many mothers in this study (Patrícia, Diana, Milada, and others) realized that even their continuous usage of the HL does not lead to a fluent command of the language by the children across contexts. They admitted that the vocabulary used in their daily conversations with the children is in fact quite limited, and thus the children simply do not encounter certain vocabulary in the HL. These mothers were concerned with finding ways to "expand" their children's command of the HL. This finding not only supports the claim of many (Fishman, 1991; Tse, 2001b) that languages are learned across different contexts and that successful HL maintenance requires at least three elements (HL use in the family, a presence of a community, and a language school). It also suggests that current thinking on HLs needs to move away from an emphasis on a simple and static "maintenance" of the HL to a more fluid concept of HL "improvement," "expansion," or "development."

The next section presents stories of parents who decided to go beyond a focus on solely the spoken language and attempted to teach their children basic literacy skills in Czech or Slovak.

Pursuing Literacy

Literacy attempts in the HL are typically made in the context of community language schools (Kondo-Brown, 2001; Lao, 2004; Li, 2005; Otcu, 2010; Yang, 2007), which is possible only for language groups with a larger concentration of speakers in a specific area. Still, successful acquisition of applicable literacy skills in the HL is generally a rare achievement even for children from Spanish-speaking backgrounds (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), where opportunities exist to take classes in Spanish as a foreign language (Randolph, 2011) or to participate in bilingual programs. In addition to the availability of educational opportunities, Spanish might be deemed language capital in the United States with the growing number of Spanish-speaking communities, businesses, churches, and so on. In this light, parental attempts at teaching literacy skills in a language as small and inapplicable as Czech or Slovak might seem I. Still, mothers in eight of the 11 families either made attempts at literacy instruction in the past or aspire to pursue literacy with their children in the future.

Among the five families with older children, Jarmila and Lucie appear to be more successful than Diana, Patrícia and Klára. The three mothers of younger children, Radka, Milada, and Bohdana are trying to decide when is the right time to start reading instruction in the HL, mostly hoping to teach their children how to read and write at some point in the future. In addition, Stanislav, Helena, and Anděla did not aspire to teach their children how to read and write in the HL. Czech is the HL in all these three families.

Successful families with older children. Juraj and Jarmila made a conscious effort to cultivate Slovak literacy skills in their son. At the beginning the reason was, as Jarmila noted, because “we didn’t know whether we would stay here or return back to Slovakia, so we wanted to keep it up so that if we did return, he could continue in school there easily.” They brought books used in Slovak public schools for first through third grade and had the child practice reading. The boy mainly just read to them when

the parents asked him to. After about third grade, Juraj said, they could no longer find enough time to practice more advanced literacy skills in Slovak, such as grammar and spelling. Still, the son learned to read in Slovak and would even pick up a book in Slovak, if interesting enough, and read it by himself. When the family visited Slovakia last year, he read newspapers and magazines in Slovak with a good understanding of the content.

Lucie and Lance went beyond a home-based approach to literacy and signed the girls up in a Slovak public school as external students. Lucie brings the books from Slovakia and works on reading skills with the girls during the year. Then, at the end of each grade, the girls take an exam in Slovakia during their summer visit. The practice mainly provides the family with some structure and deadlines in terms of the subject matter. Lucie shared about her daughters (8 and 10 years old):

They can read. (...) We are not really doing that much, but once we do sit down, they kind of read okay. They make mistakes but yeah... And as we were preparing for the test ...it was just fine, the reading. I mean of course they don't quite get (...) all that grammar stuff yet (...) that's very hard. (Lucie)

If the girls pick a book to read on their own, they most probably pick an English book, but Lucie is "hoping that... with time... as they are really comfortable reading, they *can* do that. You know, just pick up a Slovak book without even... thinking. *I have to work on that more.*" While this family has gone the furthest among all families in the sample, Lucie still feels she could be doing more. The major obstacle for Lucie is not having enough time:

Well... you know that... that's very... for me... like disappointing, because I have the books and I said I would do it, but... I never have time!! So we always do it there, right before [the exam]. (...) It's just that life is so busy. I would *like* to spend more time ...reading in Slovak with them and maybe look in those textbooks, and look at grammar, you know. I don't have the time. (...) *But...* I am *happy* they are where they are. Because I know families where the kids *don't speak*.

These two successful cases have one thing in common: the expectation that the children will need or use the HL in the future. Jarmila and Juraj truly believed they only came to the United States for

two to three years and started working on Slovak literacy skills so the boy could continue in a Slovak public elementary school in a couple of years. As they realized that they are most likely to stay in the United States, the boy already had good basics of reading and was able to read books of interest on his own. Lucie and Lance expressed a strong wish to return to Slovakia with the whole family, which provided them with further motivation to continue working on the children's language skills. Similar to this finding, Tse (2001a) found out that one of the strongest predictors of biliteracy in English and the HL was "language vitality," a perceived usefulness and prestige of the HL. Other parents in my study lacked this view of the HL, which is why they never started, stopped, or postponed the literacy efforts.

Unsuccessful families with older children. Diana, Patrícia, and Klára all attempted to teach their children how to read in the HL, but the experience was so frustrating that they soon gave up. Diana had even originally hoped to start a Slovak school herself. When she realized not enough people would participate, she decided to teach spelling and reading in Slovak to her older son at home when he was about 5 or 6 years old. She brought the Slovak Primer, which is the first textbook used by all first-grade students in Slovakia, and this is how she describes her attempts:

So we started a little bit, you know, with [my older son] (...) and... like... the child was quite frustrated because... he was only... perhaps I started at the wrong age, because he was just learning to read and write in English at that time. And now... Slovak... I tried to explain to him that 'a' is not [pronounced as the English 'a'], that *jahoda* is not [pronounced with the English 'j'], and that *more* is not [about quantity but that it means a *sea* in Slovak, and is pronounced quite differently]... and my child wasn't able to understand that... (Diana)

Although spelling of consonants does not differ between English and Slovak/Czech all that much, the vowels present a major challenge. In Czech and Slovak, each vowel is linked to one distinctive sound, which does not necessarily match the English sound for the particular vowel. And since the vowels in English can be pronounced in a number of different ways, introducing another sound, the Czech/Slovak sound, for those letters proved confusing for many children in the study.

In addition to the difficulties in simply explaining the new spelling system to the child, Diana was often tired just trying to get through the day, often working on the weekends, which left her little energy to pursue such an overwhelming task. Besides, the children had other activities scheduled for the weekend, such as swimming or soccer, typically much more interesting to them than a Slovak grammar lesson. Slowly, Diana realized her HL aspirations would probably not be fulfilled:

You have to *really want it*. You know... and you truly have to... have things *scheduled*. *Every* Sunday... from this time till this time... But then when other activities come... like we have soccer and every Sunday we have the... the games. Then we have swim team, on Saturdays, you know... and now, how do you... *add in* two extra hours of... *school*, basically! (Diana)

As Diana, although initially quite determined, considered the pros and cons of the process, she decided to settle on the spoken language, at least for the time being. She picked her battles and chose not to press the children into something that might result in an aversion to the language altogether.

Patrícia also brought the Primer and other books, and at times she showed her daughter how to read a simple sign or a word in Slovak, pointing out the differences from English, mainly in terms of punctuation and spelling of the vowels. However, she never started any regular Slovak literacy “lessons” with her daughter, and she explains why:

It is kind of difficult as... when they learn ‘a’ [in English]... it is sometimes pronounced as a [Slovak ‘e’], other times as [Slovak ‘ej’], and still at other times as I don’t know what... as a [Slovak ‘a’]. Simply, there are multiple ways to pronounce a single letter. So I cannot... it seems to me that I cannot tell her, in addition, to write [something in Slovak]. She is already puzzled enough [with spelling in English]. (Patrícia)

In addition, Patrícia sees that her time and the child’s patience and willingness to sit down and learn Slovak are limited. Her daughter already has a lot of homework from school. Patrícia sums up:

I am just glad if she finds time to finish her homework... and when we are able to... fulfill the school requirements... But to torture her beyond that with some [diacritical marks]... after lunch or in the evenings... (...) For me it is already a great effort to make her sit down for the 20 minutes and do the homework, and then still some multiplication. (...) It’s simply too much (...) and it would be extremely stressful. (Patrícia)

Patrícia goes on to explain that she encourages interest in Slovak but that “it cannot go at the expense of school work.” Given that the girl will most likely live in the United States, Patrícia feels that the amount of effort and frustration that would go into learning Slovak literacy skills is simply not worth it. While she hopes for a time in the future when her daughter might learn more Slovak on her own, she settles for less for now and highlights the benefits of an early exposure to the spoken language:

[By] teaching [my daughter] a second language... I am giving her a predisposition... to be able to learn a language she would want or need in life. (...) I am giving her a kind of a gift... and that's it. I cannot do more. (Patrícia)

Klára also took courage to embark on the literacy adventure. Quite determined at first, she had established a time on the weekends when she held “Czech lessons” for her daughter, mostly just using the Primer to practice spelling and reading. She recalls, “And we were doing it for maybe... half a year? But it was... *torture*. [My daughter] was just... fighting that off... she could not do it... she just *hated it*...” In addition to the frustration with the practice itself, Klára recognized that this “Czech school,” as she called it, was taking away the free time her daughter had on the weekends, and she soon decided not to pursue the reading instruction any more.

All three mothers attempted to instruct their children in reading in the HL but encountered major challenges, mainly the children's confusion and refusal to participate, but also their own inconsistency and time constraints. All of the mothers expressed a belief that HL activities could not continue at the expense of English and the children's success in school, thus positioning the two languages against each other as rivals. Such perception presented a dilemma of how much to press for the HL literacy. As they prioritized the children's practical needs (such as mastery of English and a success in school in the United States), they decided to give up the HL maintenance efforts, goals, and dreams.

Families with younger children. Among the three families with younger children, Bohdana has not yet attempted reading and writing practice with the children, but she “certainly” plans to do so in the future. She insisted that it was “very important” for her that the children know how to read and write in Slovak. Although her older son is in first grade now, she postpones the literacy instruction in Slovak into the future because she fears the potential interference of such efforts with learning English.

We intend to do that later... because now my priority is that he learns everything in English properly... and... I don't want to mix reading in Slovak into it, because the sounds and everything is different, so I don't want to confuse him since they are just learning to read and write [in English] in first grade. (Bohdana)

Although their children are a bit younger than Bohdana's, both Milada and Radka made some attempts at reading instruction in the HL at home. Radka, perhaps because she started before the son began learning English spelling at school, experienced some successes. She took turns with her son practicing reading from the Primer, and the boy learned how to read some simple words. Now their situation is a bit more complicated, since they have recently moved to the Netherlands. The children are currently learning Dutch, apparently making much faster progress than the parents. Radka is hoping to resume the Czech reading practices when things settle down in their new place.

Milada also started reading from the Primer with her older son, having the help of her father. However, it was quite challenging for all involved. Milada remembers, “It was very confusing because [Slovak] ‘l’ and [Slovak] ‘e’ and [English] ‘l’... So if I say [a letter sound] then he asked me, ‘What language are you speaking?’” Along with the confusion mentioned by Milada, Mark noted:

I mean the thing is... I'd worry about that it... if you are reading in Slovak... because all the words sound differently... I mean I am afraid it would slow down reading in English! But maybe not... that's an interesting research question!

Encountering challenges, Milada is also forced to pick her battles for now and settle on the spoken language. She believes that it might be easier for the children to learn how to read in Slovak as they grow older. She explains why she does not press more on the reading at present:

We are already pushing enough just to speak and... understand. So... to push even *grammar*, that would be just... I think it would discourage them... and then... I mean, that *might* discourage them, and I just don't want that. (Milada)

The three mothers of younger children expressed similar concerns to those of Klára, Patrícia, and Diana, worrying that too much focus on literacy skills in HL might interfere with literacy in English. However, the mothers of younger children still hope to resume their reading instruction with the children in the future, not giving up the effort entirely at the moment.

Summary of literacy. Among the eight families who attempted literacy instruction, only two were more or less successful. No other families pursued literacy in the HL beyond about six months. The overview of the results is presented in table 14.

Table 14. Summary of literacy

	HL	Type of family	Age of children at time of fieldwork	Have plans for literacy	Started and stopped literacy	Started and continued literacy
Jarmila	SK	All-immigrant	Older (6-17)			X
Lucie	SK	Mixed	Older (6-17)			X
Klára	CZ	Mixed	Older (6-17)		X	
Diana	SK	All-immigrant	Older (6-17)		X	
Patrícia	SK	Mixed	Older (6-17)		X	
Radka	CZ	Mixed	Younger (3-6)	X	X	
Milada	SK	Mixed	Younger (3-6)	X	X	
Bohdana	SK	All-immigrant	Younger (3-6)	X		
Anděla	CZ	All-immigrant	Older (6-17)			
Helena	CZ	All-immigrant	Older (6-17)			
Stanislav	CZ	Mixed	Older (6-17)			

X Practice present in a family

The differences in success of literacy efforts do not seem to be explained by the type of family, as mothers in both all-immigrant and mixed-marriage families found ways to foster literacy. An interesting finding is that both successful families were of Slovak origin, while the three families that

neither attempted nor planned any literacy activities were all Czech. Although Ference (1993) documented that the Slovak-speaking immigrants of 100 years ago were more often planning to return back to the country origin than Czech-speaking immigrants of the time, I cannot make claims about these differences based on the design of this study. For the purpose of this dissertation I have considered Czech and Slovak immigrant groups linguistically and culturally very similar.

However, I suggest three major explanations for the successes and failures in literacy instruction. First, the overall fluency of the children in the HL might be the major asset to overcoming all of the challenges of this battle. Jarmila's and Lucie's children are among to the most fluent in the sample, while Helena's and Stanislav's children have virtually no knowledge of the HL. Confidence in the spoken language most probably plays an important role in the children's perseverance during the times that are often frustrating for others.

Second, the parents' and the children's motivation to endure and be diligent in finding enough time and energy for literacy practice is likely a crucial factor. Both Jarmila and Lucie thought the children or the whole family might move to Slovakia or the Czech Republic and that the children would need to know the HL in such a case. This strong motivation regarding a future use of the language is reflected in the parents' practices and strategies. Juraj and Jarmila practiced reading, following the Slovak schoolbooks for three years with their son, and Lucie and Lance signed up their daughters in a public school in Slovakia as external students. This second finding supports previous research claiming that *language vitality*, described as both usefulness and prestige of the language (Tse, 2001a), constitutes a critical factor in successful retention of the HL especially as it relates to literacy skills.

And third, parental perception of the relationship between the two languages has largely influenced their language practices. While English takes priority for all the parents, in unsuccessful families with older children, the HL literacy effort was given up entirely not only because it became

frustrating, but also because it was perceived as *in conflict* with English language development and progress of the child. Similarly, parents with younger children tend to postpone the literacy practice into the future *in order to prevent any possible interference* with English language and English literacy development. When the two languages are positioned as rivals and HL literacy instruction is perceived as in conflict with English development, the parents tend to quit the effort. Although even Lucie and Jarmila complained about not having enough time for the HL efforts *in addition* to focusing on school-related tasks and English homework, they were the only ones not to mention HL being in direct conflict with English. The parental perception of language interference does not align with research findings, as it has been shown that linguistic skills are transferable from one language to another (García, 2009).

Nurturing Motivation

Lastly, parents encouraged children to use and learn the HL by nurturing a motivation in the children. This task was quite difficult in the face of the monolingual and largely monocultural schooling system and society. Most mothers expressed the belief that without the children's willingness to pursue the HL language nothing would be achieved. Thus, creating and nurturing a motivation in the children represented a common parental strategy aimed at HL maintenance. Some parents mentioned they would not "push too hard" to make the children speak the HL or to learn grammar, precisely because they worried about losing this valuable resource, the children's positive relationship to the culture and language. Diana summed up the need for motivation:

You know the point is that... the child must... must be *driven*, he must simply... care! (...) For if the child simply does not feel the connection... and does not want to learn, I plainly don't have enough energy and patience! (Diana)

Motivation was to help the children overcome the challenges of HL learning and use. With a proper motivation, parents believed, the children might be more willing to use the spoken HL, keep

trying to find the correct words, or even sit down and learn some grammar. In addition, many parents realized that, while they might have some control over their children's language use and choices at present, any future decisions about HL learning would be made by the children themselves. Motivation to learn was perceived key for the children to return to the HL on their own. Patrícia stated:

But of course it will be her own decision (...) and I think... that the most important thing is for them to have a positive relationship to the culture... to the language. That's what I can do for her. (...) So that later she can decide whether it was *cool* that we were going to Slovakia, or that my mother is Slovak... 201uti 's weird. (Patrícia)

Milada, Diana, and others believed that, if motivated, their children might even learn some grammar when they grow up. Helena also feels that nurturing the sense of belonging might help her son find his place in the world and perhaps even to learn the language eventually. Thus, providing motivation for the children had two main purposes: first, to help overcome the *present* challenges of HL learning, and second, to provide the children with grounds to pursue the HL use *in the future*. The latter might have also served as a coping mechanism for parents who felt they did not quite reach their aspirations at present moment. In such cases, even when transmission of the language was not successful, parents might still frame their effort positively. They may feel somewhat satisfied if they believe they had "at least" planted a positive relationship to the culture and an interest in the language in the children, hoping the children might one day re-learn the language.

Since most parents could not imagine the HL would have any practical future use for the children, making the case for learning the language proved a bit complicated. Still, parents used a number of different strategies to generate motivation for the children, although not always successfully.

HL for practical use. Parents in only two families expected the children to need the HL in the future, confirming the findings of Tse (2001a) on language vitality. Lucie's children were aware of the parents' desire to return to Slovakia, and Jarmila's son thought about studying overseas. At the time of

fieldwork he was pondering the possibility of attending college in the Czech Republic (as he understood both Slovak and Czech well). These were the families with the most fluent children. Building a relationship with grandparents constituted another strategy. When communicating with grandparents, the children needed to use the HL. In addition, a number of parents attempted to portray the HL as *practical* and frame it as a “secret language” that could be used among the siblings or within family exclusively. However, this was more an idea of the parents than a reality. Only Anděla’s and Lucie’s children at times used the HL with this motivation in mind. Generally, the two most frequently used strategies for creating motivation were transnational travel and nurturing a sense of ethnic identity and cultural roots in the children, the former bringing more success than the latter.

Transnational travel. Since the children generally did not need the HL to get by in their daily life in the United States (because everyone understood English), the only option for the parents to demonstrate the usefulness of the language was to take the children to the Czech Republic or Slovakia. The trips overseas served a number of purposes: They provided an avenue for the children to learn more about the culture, to be immersed in the language, to build relationships with extended family, and to prove that the HL indeed does have a use beyond just speaking to one’s mother. Bohdana explained the importance of the trips as follows:

The biggest influence, in my opinion, is that the children have the opportunity to go there, to travel, to be with their grandparents, and to have the *contact* (...) And to generate an interest in them that they *want* to go there (...) Because if we were only *here*, and they don’t go to Slovakia or the Czech Republic, and they don’t meet people *there* with whom they can communicate... I think they lose a kind of a reason for *why* to actually do it. (Bohdana)

Realizing the importance of this resource, parents sought to take the children overseas as often as possible and for as long as possible. In addition, they tried to make these trips fun and enjoyable so that the children would want to come back the following year. Finding specific pieces of the heritage culture to catch the child’s attention and interest was a common strategy. Patrícia shared, “I simply try

to find the things... in Slovakia.... that [my daughter] enjoys... and to stick to it.. so that she has something to motivate her.” Patrícia found that grand old castles and knights with horses captured her daughter’s interest, and she made every effort to visit medieval castles and take her daughter to events involving people in costumes as princesses and knights. Similarly, a number of parents with boys, such as Milada, Radka, and Diana, shared that the children loved taking trains and trams, something they hardly ever got to do in the southeastern United States. Diana, for example, shared:

You know, they like it... for them it is... better than Disneyland... going to Slovakia. *There...* they have busses, subway, trams... trains! But *here...* we... we pay for this ‘fun’ train somewhere in New Hill... and it goes a half-an-hour in the woods... you know... a little old train (...) *There...* we take a train to travel from one grandma to the other! You know... and... through 23 tunnels between Bystrica and Zilina [cities in Slovakia]. They are just totally amazed! You know, for them it is... for them is it a whole different world! So they like it a lot. They ask me, even now, ‘Why don’t we go home this year?’ But... you know... I have to explain that it’s not possible to go home *every* year... I mean... I call it *home*, they say *go to grandma*. (Diana)

The trips overseas served as a magnet for children’s interest in the heritage culture, while providing the much-needed immersion in the HL, similar to what has been reported before (Kondo, 1997; Nesteruk, 2010; Rong, 2005). Still, a number of obstacles stood in the way for many families, including not having enough vacation time, difficulties finding an affordable place to stay with the whole family (in case grandparents have only a small apartment), the fact that one parent had to stay in the United States to work, and the overall expenses with such trips.

Ethnic identity. As suggested by previous literature (Lee, 2002; Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Otcu, 2010; Tse, 2001a), nurturing a sense of ethnic identity and belonging in the children served as an important strategy for providing a motivation for the HL. All the families in which both parents were immigrants reported celebrating Czech or Slovak holidays, keeping ethnic traditions, cooking Slovak meals, and so on. Although keeping to ethnic traditions provided a sense of the ethnic culture to the children, the cultural practices were not always happily received. Often, cultural practices made the

children feel alien, excluded from the American mainstream. Some children refused to take an ethnic meal to school for lunch because they did not want to answer questions from other kids; other children wondered why other families had a Christmas tree up since Thanksgiving and they had to wait until Christmas Eve. As a result, parents at times debated whether they were doing their children any favor by trying to preserve the ethnic culture. Many parents recognized that the children have a much weaker link to the heritage country than parents do, and unlike parents, consider *home* to be in America. The children were growing up to feel much more American than Czech or Slovak (Zhou, 1997). To avoid conflict, parents often followed traditions in both cultures, such as celebrating the Thanksgiving holiday, although it had nothing to do with Czech or Slovak culture or history.

An exception to this rule was Anděla and Arnošt. While they did not put a major emphasis on the HL, they have managed to build a strong ethnic identity in their daughters who now feel more Czech than American. However, this strong sense of ethnic identity was achieved through a negation of an American identity (although both girls are American citizens), causing the children to distance themselves from being an American. Anděla explained, “We just always say... ‘Czech Republic is better, Europe is better,’ you know... we watch ice-hockey, for example, and we cheer for the Czechs, yeah.”

In the mixed-marriage families, the preservation of Czech and Slovak ethnic culture and identity was more complicated and generally not as strong. Although the mothers tried to introduce at least some ethnic traditions, it was done mostly *in addition* to the American ways. An example of a compromise would be Milada’s children receiving a couple of presents on Christmas Eve “because they are Slovak” (Milada) and the rest on Christmas day. Many parents in mixed-marriage families specifically expressed that they valued the cultural differences and the dialog more than patriotism to any one single country. According to the parents, however, the children felt more American than Czech or Slovak, without exception.

Only the children in two all-immigrant families consider themselves more “Slovak” than “American.” Jarmila’s son was actually born in Slovakia, and still, Jarmila was positively “surprised” when her son expressed an interest in Slovak history and traditions and borrowed books about the country from the public library. Bohdana’s children might feel more Slovak perhaps because they are still quite young with family being their major source of identification.

The findings on ethnic belonging not only confirm existing literature (Alba 1990; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) claiming that European-origin immigrants might “Americanize” faster than other racial groups. They also raise an important question of whether it is possible to cultivate an ethnic identity when an ethnic community is not present. In addition, the children’s sense of ethnic identity and cultural roots does not necessarily ensure their HL learning and use. In Anděla’s case, for example, the children felt definitely more Czech but the ethnic identification did not lead to major pursuit of or development in the HL. This finding complicates our understanding of the relationship between ethnic identity and HL maintenance.

The challenge: Heritage language as parents’ responsibility. The overarching challenge parents faced in creating motivation for their children to pursue the HL was overcoming the power of the ever-present monolingualistic and monocultural environment in which the children are growing up (Cummins, 1986; Gibson, 1988; Taylor et al., 2008; Valenzuela, 1999; 2002). Parents complained not only that languages other than English are generally neither valued nor encouraged but also that schools fail to provide a general awareness about other cultures and the world altogether. When none of the motivations for HL learning come from *within* the United States, the country the children consider their *home*, it comes as no surprise the children might see little logic in pursuing the language. Parents found it difficult to fight for the HL alone, against the general consensus present in the larger society and schools. To do so they mainly through a relied on a transnational context: by taking the children

overseas and by expecting the children to use the HL in the future. Cultivation of an ethnic identity was not the most successful strategy.

Recognizing that both Czech and Slovak are very rare languages with small numbers of speakers in the area, the parents did not expect schools to offer Czech or Slovak language classes. They understood that the role of HL instruction would fall on them, if they chose to pursue the task. An example is provided by an exchange between Lucie and Lance:

Lucie: I am not expecting anything.

Lance: It's just always been our responsibility, and... you know... for... maybe it would differ amongst language groups... I don't know, but... you know, for a Slovak...

Lucie: 'Cause we are so small...

Lance: ...I mean... what resources are there? Except... you know...

Lucie: If you live in New York City I heard they have a great Czech and Slovak... community center. That would be *great!* You know...

Lance: Yeah. Or Pittsburg, or... in different places where these... Chicago... where there is pockets of...

Lucie: So no, I have never expected anything. Because I knew we were a small minority, I mean... maybe Latinos have a different expectation since... it's such a...

Lance: (...) so it's our responsibility, really, and... to not just... make sure that they learn it but they also... appreciate it (...) ...them... being bilingual ...and understand the importance of it. And that's what I try to do... 'cause I can't help them with the language part of it. But I can at least... try to encourage them to... ahm... even though I am the English-speaking parent, it's still *very important to me* that they know Slovak.

Every parent made at least one comment of the kind, pointing out that HL maintenance is a family issue, a goal to be pursued by the parents if deemed important. Anděla, for example, shared:

I don't think that one should have a *right*... that it is simply a choice what one wants to teach the children. And if it matters enough that the children know it... then the parents have to take care of it themselves... to teach them. (...) to secure a tutor or something, but it is not that they would have a right to any special support... it's simply their choice... if they want to teach it or not.

Bohdana voiced the common opinion as follows:

There are too many immigrants here, and so diverse... that you can't expect anyone to... supply any kind of services. It is either on the community... on or each one individually... to decide whether to educate the child in one's own language or not. It would be nice if... we found enough Slovaks here and decided to... do school every Saturday. That would be great!

With regard to the actual instruction of the HL, most parents mentioned they would welcome a support of a community language school or an orchestrated effort of more families to focus on literacy development. Still, such an effort would depend on the time and resources of the immigrants themselves. Many scholars (Cummins, 2005; Fishman, 2001; García, 2009; Valdés, 2001) have argued that one of the reasons HLs are not flourishing in this country is because they are positioned as a pursuit of the immigrant families, not necessarily a concern of schools or the country in general. The scholars suggest that we need to approach HLs as resources if they are to be maintained. More specifically, García (2005) argued that HLs are still approached more as a passive *link towards the past*, rather than a *resource for the future*.

Schools to encourage bilingualism. While the participants recognized schools were not able to provide an instruction in the HL because of the small numbers of speakers, they complained about the lack of a general support of bilingualism as well as the lack of global awareness children receive in schools. A simple valuation of the child's other language or the linguistic background would be a sufficient compromise for the parents. Ken noted, "Schools can definitely encourage bilingualism, you know, I mean (...) I think all of us need to promote that. And there are teachers that *definitely* don't have that attitude..." Some parents in the sample opted for private schools or specifically picked a public school that was ethnically and linguistically diverse. Radka, for examples, made an effort to find a school that she considers "the most multicultural school in [town]." She sums up the positives of her choice:

I believe that the environment, philosophy and the diversity of the student body in the school encouraged all children to value their heritage... and [to] continue learning a second language. Even though the common language in the school was English, the children all knew who had ties to which country and what other language(s) they spoke. ...I believe that because many children spoke another language, the bi/multi-lingual children felt not only that they belonged and that being bi/multi-lingual was common and normal, but also made them feel interesting and special that they knew a language that many others did not. (Radka)

This experience was, however, rather exceptional. Most parents felt that schools and teachers had no interest in the HL learning of their children. A few parents, from the all-immigrant families, shared with a bit of a surprise that the teachers in preschool or even kindergarten did not know the child's native/first language was not English. Diana alleged with resignation:

They don't care at all! Except that they give you a form at the beginning, asking whether your child... what is your mother tongue, you know, and you fill out... whatever... and that's it. And they place you in ESL or not but that's it. Nobody cares.

On the other hand, none of the parents received any direct suggestion from school to speak English instead of the HL at home, a case apparently still happening in the NC schools today (personal communication, TESOL). When the parents decided to speak English to the child in order to help him/her with school-related tasks, it was always their own choice, perhaps based on their perception of what matters in the American (and global) context.

Teachers need to be aware of children's needs (ESL classes). A number of parents expressed their doubts about some aspects of the ESL program or more generally about the elementary teachers' competence in teaching children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Bohdana told me she was surprised that her son was not considered eligible for ESL classes in kindergarten although he "obviously" did not understand what he was asked to do on some of the assignments and tests. She thought it was perhaps because he had scored high enough on the tests, even though he did not understand many questions, and thus his lower English proficiency went unnoticed by the teacher.

In kindergarten he didn't take ESL, they considered him... fluent, but in first grade, because I insisted... as I saw that he couldn't understand... he got into the ESL class. And he goes – I think – three times a week for half an hour. (...) I think that many teachers in these schools do not understand that these children have English as their second language. Like the teachers don't have experience with that. (...) But I credit the school that... [my son] will be able to go to an ESL camp for the summer... at school. (Bohdana)

Similarly, Anděla, a mother in an all-Czech family who provided more English for her children early on, for example, was surprised not only by how fast the girls picked up the language but mostly by the fact that the children's teachers did not notice the girls came from an immigrant home:

It seemed to me that the books, the TV, the computer... saturated them fully with all they needed, and nobody... not even the teachers at the beginning knew that... like that [it wasn't their first language] ...that surprised me. (Anděla)

These accounts of teachers' ignorance of children's insufficient command of English may be an illustration of the persistence of racial categories as a marker of difference in public schools and the broader society. On one hand, White children in this study were not included in ESL classes despite their insufficient proficiency in English. On the other hand, Latino children today are often segregated from white students into ESL classes without even making a linguistic assessment, simply because they are Latinos (Cervantes-Soon, personal communication). Diana shared another story, illustrating that English language learners are still viewed through a deficiency paradigm in schools today. She shared how she was warned against enrolling her child in the ESL program by the school personnel:

I was filling out the forms... and I was asked what the child's first language was, and I put in *Slovak*. (...) But then I was told that... to be *careful* for if I stated *that* as a first language, the child would be placed in a compulsory ESL class (...) Because perhaps some people might think that 209uti something... *bad*, like that ... like your child is *behind* (...). So the lady saw that I speak English... and that probably the child speaks [English] as well... so she said that if I didn't want I didn't have to put [the Slovak language] on the form. But I said, 'Well, I *want* to 209uti t in,' you know? (Diana)

Diana's comment suggests that attending ESL classes is seen in a negative light. The child's knowledge of another language is recognized only as a potential hindrance to acquiring English, not as an asset to be nourished and further developed (Cummins, 2005; Fishman, 2001; García, 2009; Valdés, 2001). Bohdana's and Anděla's concern about teachers' awareness point to the need to train teachers, especially in a new immigrant state such as North Carolina, to be more aware of and responsive to the needs of immigrant-origin students (Randolph, 2011).

Schools to encourage global awareness. In addition to the lack of support for bilingualism, the curriculum reportedly did not introduce any kind of global awareness, or knowledge about the world as opposed to focusing simply on the United States. Diana compared Slovak and American schools:

So for instance what do Slovak kids know... oftentimes about America or generally about the world... Europe, American, Africa... simply where things are... they have an idea. Children here... have no idea. You know, like I don't know when do they start learning geography... but we have an atlas... a globe at home, you know, and we point that... here we fly over the Atlantic ocean, a here, this very small pink dot... is Slovakia, and... here you see, it is Carolina. (Diana)

In addition, Diana and other participants mentioned numerous examples of adults in the United States who had no idea about what countries were in Europe, that Czechs and Slovaks don't speak Russian, and that Budapest was not, indeed, a capital of Slovakia. Helena, for example, noted that:

If you ask anybody, 'What is the capital of Bulgaria?' ...they don't know! 'What is Great Britain... what's the difference between Great Britain and United Kingdom?' ...*they don't know!* (...) If you ask them, 'What currency they have in England?' ...*They don't know!* (Helena)

Helena sees the link between the global un-awareness of the people she met and the schooling experiences of the children. She recalled a conversation with her son:

And I said, Didn't you take... ah... European history?' [And the son says] 'Oh, you don't have to take it in high school. That's a choice, that you... you know? You might take it for extra credit, but it's not mandatory!' [And I say] 'But it *needs to be mandatory!*' (Helena)

Thus, while none of the parents in this study expected schools to offer language classes in Czech and Slovak, they wished for some sort of recognition of the benefits of bilingualism to serve as an encouragement for their children to keep working on the HL. In addition, many parents wished that school taught more general knowledge about the world, which would further validate the HL in the eyes of the children and their peers. For now, in the eyes of the parents, the only meeting point between school and the HL is that, the HL efforts certainly should not interfere with any school-related work of the children. This belief is perhaps a result of internalizing of the widespread assimilatory processes deeply rooted in the wider society.

Summary of Nurturing Motivation. Most parents in the study were convinced that without motivation not much could be achieved in terms of the HL maintenance either at present or in the future. At the same time, however, they recognized that there is no vital *need* for the children to use the HL in the U.S. context, making their effort of providing motivation quite challenging. Only two families (Jarmila and Lucie) expected the children to need the HL in their future. Otherwise, the most successful strategy of providing a motivation was to take the children *outside* of the environment in which the language is considered insignificant and useless, into the Czech Republic or Slovakia, to prove that the HL indeed has a real use in the outside world. The frequent prolonged visits overseas proved to be the best strategy to create motivation for the children. Many children look forward to these trips, mainly because of the parents' effort to make the visits as enjoyable for the children as possible.

Another parental strategy, cultivating an ethnic identity, proved more difficult. Children in most families felt more American than Czech or Slovak, even in all-immigrant families, confirming the identity shift in the second generation (Portes & Rumbaut; Zhou, 1997). The only exceptions to the rule were Jarmila, where the child was born in Slovakia and had thus stronger ties to the country, and Anděla, who deliberately juxtaposed the Czech and the American identity and continually discouraged the children from feeling American.

Finally, while parents accepted that it was their own responsibility to provide the *instruction* in the HL, they would welcome the help of schools in terms of providing a *motivation* for and a *validation* of their language efforts – be it by promoting bilingualism in general or providing children with a more global awareness of the world. Overcoming the beliefs and structural constraints of the monolingualistic and monocultural environment (Lee & Suarez, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999) in order to both pursue the instruction and provide motivation for the children, was a challenge for these parents. They felt they had no allies in their HL maintenance efforts.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to better understand the processes of HL maintenance and loss among immigrants in the United States from a sample of 11 Czech and Slovak immigrant and mixed-marriage families. This chapter answers the Research Question 1 and 2, illustrating the multiplicity of experiences across families who share similar cultures, languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Research Question 1: Parental Experiences with HL Retention in Children

Drawing on the results presented in chapters 4, 5, and 6, parental experiences can be described, with some exceptions, in eight themes: (1) Parents highly valued the HL but generally did not see its future practical use for their children. (2) Parental effort at HL maintenance ranged from strong resolve to ambivalence. (3) Parents in mixed-marriage families experienced HL maintenance as a struggle from the start, while parents in all-immigrant families faced the dilemma of when and how much English to introduce. (4) English and the HL were often perceived as rivals interfering with one another. (5) Parents felt isolated in their efforts to promote and teach the HL. (6) Parents in all families observed an intergenerational shift in the relationship and sense of belonging to the heritage culture and language. (7) All parents experienced a gap between their original goals and the children's current HL proficiency. (8) The children's less-than-expected HL fluency and identity choices triggered grief in many parents.

(1) Valuing the HL but rarely seeing its future practical use. Most parents in this study greatly valued the HL and described initially high goals for the children. Parents in 10 families expected fluent use of the HL by the children, and parents in 8 families hoped for literacy skills. In terms of motivation for HL maintenance, the HL was to serve as a means of communication with grandparents, distant

family, and populations overseas and as a “secret language” within the United States. In addition, the HL was perceived as a tool for ethnic identity maintenance and a vehicle for learning about the heritage culture and the family’s ethnic roots. Finally, other motivations not involving or implying the children’s proficiency in the HL were mentioned, such the increased ability to learn other languages, cognitive benefits to the child, and an appreciation of cultural differences.

However, a closer look at these motivations revealed a problematic positioning of the HL. Many parents approached the language more as a sentimental link to the past than as a practical resource that might be of use to the children in the future (such as for academic achievement or finding a job). While the HL represented the cultural heritage of the parents/mothers, the parents themselves prioritized English for their children as the language of the country in which they lived and as an essential asset for their future (regardless of where they might live). Only two families (Jarmila and Lucie) expected the HL to play an important role in the children’s future lives. This positioning likely influenced the language practices and determination in these families; the children were among the most fluent in the HL. According to all other parents, growing up and expecting to stay in the United States entailed learning English well. The HL was approached as a hobby or an interest to be pursued in one’s free time *in addition* to any and all school requirements.

Parental motivations and views of why the HL should or should not be maintained provided insight into the process of HL loss within the larger circumstances of immigrant life. The positioning of the HL was most likely affected by the absence of an ethnic community (where an HL could serve a more practical purpose), by the perceived irrelevance of the language in the public sphere in the United States and across the world, and finally by the schools’ and larger society’s perceived disregard for parental efforts to teach a language other than English. As demonstrated in the participants’ approach to the HL, the impact of society’s focus on the assimilation of immigrants can be multifarious and

multidimensional, affecting parents' perceptions of the very importance of HL maintenance and influencing children's attitudes toward the HL.

(2) Unpacking the multiplicity of approaches toward and experiences with HL maintenance.

Parental effort at HL maintenance ranged from strong resolve to ambivalence. Only one family (Stanislav, mixed marriage) chose not to use any HL at home. One family (Anděla, all immigrant) exhibited moderate efforts at Czech HL maintenance, mainly because the parents did not expect the children to need the language beyond oral communication with grandparents. The rest of the families showed a strong resolve to maintain the HL, although only in some families did this resolve lead to success. For three families, the pursuit of HL proved challenging and led to a degree of resignation and surrender. Helena (all immigrant) stopped using Czech with her son early in order to help him develop his English skills. Klára (mixed marriage) struggled with code-switching between her daughter and her husband and eventually followed her daughter and began using only English herself. Lastly, Patrícia (mixed marriage) still uses mostly Slovak with her daughter, unless the subject is more complex (or school related), but her daughter does not respond in Slovak.

Parents in four families currently make strong efforts to keep the HL alive. Radka and Milada (both mixed marriage) struggle to make their children use at least a simple form of the HL, while Diana and Bohdana (both all immigrant) attempt to slow the recent shift in language preference from Slovak to English. Finally, Jarmila (all immigrant) and Lucie (mixed marriage) are more or less content with their HL efforts and results. Jarmila's son is fluent in Slovak and English and even reads Slovak newspapers and books. Lucie's daughters benefit from annual summer-long vacations in Slovakia, which help boost their fluency and reading abilities each year. Altogether, the majority of parents pursued HL maintenance with strong resolve, encountering (but not always overcoming) multiple challenges.

(3) Struggles and dilemmas. Most parents in this study experienced HL maintenance as a struggle against the general prevalence of English, against the monolingual pressures of schools and society, against their own indolence, and even against their own children. The only two exceptions were Stanislav's family, which spoke no HL, and Anděla's family, in which the parents considered the children's HL input and proficiency sufficient for their future.

Generally, parents in mixed-marriages families experienced HL maintenance as a struggle from the start, restricting use of English, seeking to provide sufficient HL exposure, and attempting to make children use the HL at home. For all mixed-marriage children, English was their stronger language, which made it difficult for them to use the HL in regular conversation with the mother. Conversely, parents in all-immigrant families faced the dilemma of deciding when and how much English to introduce. Typically, children in all-immigrant families became fluent in the HL before they encountered any major exposure to English. At the time they entered daycare (Helena) or kindergarten (Diana, Bohdana), they began using more English, and the HL became increasingly difficult for them to use. Even for Jarmila's son who was born in Slovakia, English became the dominant language soon after his enrollment in elementary school. Therefore, it became a struggle even for parents in all-immigrant families to keep the children responding in the HL, with only Jarmila succeeding completely.

However, the children's HL proficiency was not simply a result of parental ability to overcome challenges. It was also a result of their very choice to engage (or not) in this endeavor. Although HL maintenance was a great aspiration for many parents, it was neither the only nor the most important goal they had for their children. Most parents faced dilemmas in whether to pursue HL learning strictly, especially in literacy instruction. They encountered situations in which a strong emphasis on HL was perceived as incompatible with their other goals. In such moments, they felt that they needed to make a choice and prioritize their goals.

Specifically, parents in six families perceived a strong focus on the HL as potentially interfering with their children's English acquisition, reading, and spelling. As English was perceived as a priority for the children's future life in the United States and likely anywhere else in the world, HL literacy efforts were often postponed or abandoned because they were perceived as being in conflict with achieving literacy in English. In addition, insisting on HL use jeopardized open communication between parents and children in a number of cases, causing the parents to relinquish their HL goals and accept English as a means of communication between themselves and the children. Similarly, mothers in five families feared that excessive HL demands (such as literacy instruction) might cause the children to develop a negative attitude toward the heritage culture and language, which the mothers certainly wanted to avoid. These goals thus took precedence over the efforts to achieve children's proficiency in the HL.

Therefore, HL maintenance for these parents was a question not only of whether they were *able* to do it but also of their priorities and whether they *should* continue their HL efforts and pursue HL learning at all costs. I argue that children's proficiency in the HL is a result of not only the resources that parents could secure but also of the parents' priorities and motivations. Among the parents who strived to maintain the HL, only Jarmila, Lucie, and Radka did not mention having to choose between the HL and other goals, except for noting the lack of time for HL teaching and learning.

(4) Languages often perceived as rivals. The one dilemma mentioned by many parents was the relationship between English and the HL. All parents felt that successful HL learning could be achieved only if spoken English were restricted around the children. Moreover, many parents perceived a strong focus on HL literacy as interfering with their children's English language development. In fact, most parents experienced the HL and English not as complementary or reinforcing but, rather, as incompatible, as competitors for the child's abilities. This tension was most prominent in relation to literacy skills, where parents postponed (Bohdana, Milada) or gave up (Diana, Klára, Patrícia) HL literacy

practice specifically because they feared it would have negative effects on the child's reading and spelling in English. In addition, Helena began using English at home so her son would *not to be behind* in English. According to these parents, HL maintenance efforts should never interfere with English literacy. The only exceptions were Jarmila, Lucie, and Anděla, who did not position the languages as rivals.

The viewing of the two languages in direct opposition to each other, as an either-or proposition might be influenced by the messages from schools and/or by the media (Crawford, 2008). It has also been documented that the second language (English in the U.S. context) is too often learned not *in addition to* the HL but *in place of* the HL (Fillmore, 1991; Kouritzin, 1999). In contrast, research literature on bilingualism suggests that language skills are transferable, that literacy in one language promotes the child's ability to learn another language (Baker, 2011; García, 2009).

(5) Lack of support from schools and society. For all parents, schools and the wider U.S. society represented places that had no concern for the parents' HL efforts. Teachers did not actively make use of the children's linguistic and cultural knowledge; many did not even know that the children spoke a language other than English. Parents rarely made an effort to inform teachers about the languages spoken at home, mostly because of their belief that schools did not care. Patrícia attempted to send a Slovak practice book with her daughter to preschool, asking the teacher to let the child trace words in the book. Her offer was refused. Similarly, when Diana was filling out a form at an elementary school, she was advised not to mention that her son spoke another language at home. Based on these kinds of encounters, parents realized that HL was relevant mostly only within the family, while English represented the world of schools, employment, and wider society. As Lee (2009) documented, Native American youth also receive and internalize messages about the superiority of English for success in American society.

This perceived lack of interest was seen as problematic by the parents. They related feeling isolated in their effort to teach the HL to the children. More significantly, they struggled to find a reasonable argument for why the children should put effort into HL learning if, in fact, it had no exchange value in the society in which they lived. The parents believed that simple encouragement from teachers or the inclusion of geography and global awareness into the early curriculum would justify the parents' efforts and make their task easier. Otherwise, the children would fail to see the importance of HL maintenance. Later, perhaps when they enrolled in college, it might be too late to reclaim the linguistic heritage because most of it would be forgotten.

(6) Children's ethnic and linguistic identity. Most parents realized that the children's ethnic identity was much less pronounced than they had hoped. According to the parents, most children felt unambiguously more American than Czech or Slovak. Only Anděla's daughters maintained a strong Czech identity (and opposed to being American) although they were both U.S. citizens. In two other families, the children identified with the heritage country to some degree. Jarmila's son was born in Slovakia, and Bohdana's children were still quite young and identified mostly with their Slovak parents. All the other children in the study felt much more American than Czech or Slovak.

Still, many children framed their sense of belonging as not exclusive to a single country. Instead, they considered themselves both Czech/Slovak and American. Lucie estimated that her daughters felt 60% American and 40% Slovak. This family, however, traveled to Slovakia often, and the girls were the only children in the study to have dual citizenship, officially both American and Slovak.

(7) Perceived gap between dreams and reality. It was typical in all families not only that the children were less fluent in the HL than parents but also that the children were less fluent than the parents had hoped. At the same time, many parents realized that they themselves were doing less for their children's HL development than they had planned; for example, they were using more English,

postponing literacy practices, and not following through with the reading lessons at home. Some families experienced a smaller gap (Jarmila, Lucie), while others saw a larger disparity between their dreams and the current HL fluency of their children. The size of the gap could not be explained by the type of family (mixed-marriage or all-immigrant families). However, there were differences between families with older children and families with younger children, suggesting that a major challenge came at the start of elementary school and required managing the priorities and resources in such a way that would lead to HL retention, not attrition.

Parents of younger children generally did not see a large difference between their dreams and their reality, although they came to realize that the process of HL maintenance was not as easy as previously thought (Bohdana, Milada, and Radka). These parents noticed their children's struggles with the spoken HL but still believed that they would retain the language or even improve and learn literacy skills later. These parents did not give up their dreams, only postponed their realization into the future.

Among the parents with older children, most experienced a much larger gap between their dreams and the current language use at home (Helena, Klára, Diana, and Patrícia). Some mothers realized that their children would most likely never learn to read in the HL; others had to accept that their children were much less than fluent in the spoken HL. All these mothers lowered their expectations more or less dramatically. They also realized that any future HL learning would have to be done by the children themselves, if they choose to do so. Overall, parents felt a sense of responsibility for their children's HL proficiency, suggesting that the parents could have done a better job if they had more time and resources. This belief was further strengthened by the parents' self-comparisons with other families, pointing out the success stories of others, and by transnational peer pressure to teach the HL to the children. Only parents in two families with older children (Jarmila and Lucie) were more or less satisfied with the children's current HL proficiency.

(8) Parental grief and reconciliation. Many parents expressed a sense of sadness that their children could not speak the HL well and did not have a strong relationship to their heritage, their roots, and, most importantly, their mother's experience in the world. Patrícia, for instance, wished that her children knew the place where she grew up, spoke the same language, and felt at least somewhat proud of their Slovak origin. In reality, however, parents had to accept that their children, at best, view the Czech Republic or Slovakia as a cool place to visit. Diana, for example, noted that she calls the visits to Slovakia as "going home" but her children as "visiting grandma."

Overall, however, parents came reconcile themselves to the children's linguistic and identity shift. A few interconnected, minor themes might help explain how parents coped with the intergenerational differences. Parents in eight families argued that their children would not need the HL in their future. Parents in seven families emphasized that the children had received the basics of the language and ethnic culture, which would help them reclaim their language and ethnic identity in the future, if they so choose. Finally, parents in ten families voiced their belief that being exposed to another language and culture helps children in a number of ways: It allows them to learn other languages more quickly, helps them succeed academically, and makes them sensitive to cultural differences. These justifications allowed parents come to terms with the children's linguistic and ethnic identity.

Research Question 2: Conditions Contributing to Heritage Language Retention/Attrition

The second research question was posed as follows: "As perceived by parents, what socialization practices and larger societal conditions contribute to or interrupt their children's heritage language maintenance?" The factors most commonly cited in the literature as positively influencing HL maintenance among children of immigrants are 1) the presence of an ethnic community where the

language can be both used and validated; 2) a bilingual or ethnic language school as a formal setting for language instruction; and finally, 3) the language practices within the immigrant family (Fishman, 1991). Research suggests that, for successful maintenance of the HL, more than one of these three factors typically needs to be present, ideally all three (Tse, 2001b).

This dissertation examined the HL practices of two language groups highly unlikely to retain the HL across generations. Unlike in traditional destinations (Texas, Nebraska) and large cities (New York City, Chicago), Czechs and Slovaks in the southeastern United States do not live within functioning ethnic communities, and HL classes are rare. For participants in this study, the only context for HL use was the immigrant home. Two more factors further reduced the probability of success in HL maintenance: (1) In half the families, only one parent was an immigrant and an HL speaker, and (2) neither Czech nor Slovak is a major global language with high international prestige. Taking these factors into account, it comes almost as a surprise that any HL learning happened in these families. Many children in this study understood the HL, even if in a simplified form or at a slower pace. Many spoke the language when overseas, and a few could even read in Slovak. These findings complicate our understanding of HL loss and contradict the literature explaining HL maintenance and loss by the presence or absence of fixed variables, such as the presence of an ethnic community and a language school, the prestige of the language, and family composition. Although some parents participating in this study were more successful than others, no clear demographic markers explained the differences between families.

The three conditions most often leading to HL retention across families in this study were 1) motivation, including positioning of the HL as a valuable resource for the children and perceiving the two language as mutually complementary (not as adversaries or competitors); 2) consistent HL use in the home, including two parents from the same linguistic background; and 3) regular and lengthy transnational trips and visits by grandparents to the United States. In other words, successful HL

maintenance resulted from both the *ability* to secure sufficient resources and from the very *choice* to pursue the HL. The differences between families certainly were a result of their HL practices, which in turn were influenced greatly by the parents' priorities. Consequently, the conditions that disrupted HL maintenance included insufficient motivation (perhaps caused by the strong assimilatory forces in the dominant society) and the use of fewer strategies for HL maintenance.

(1) Motivation (or lack thereof). Many parents strove to motivate their children to learn the HL. However, most parents had difficulty conceiving of the HL as a useful resource for the children's future. Most parents did not consider the HL necessary for communicating with children because of the parents' own fluency in English, and they did not see any major need for the HL beyond communication with grandparents. Most parents expected their children to live in the United States and consequently prioritized English over the HL. In addition, when it was unclear where the children would eventually live, English still received priority because of its global importance. The strong prioritization of English over the HL by the parents led to a lower proficiency in the HL of the children (Stanislav, Helena, Anděla). In these families, parents were unwilling to risk the children being behind in English. They focused on English as the major language in their children's future lives and used English at home themselves. Parents in other families were induced to use English when helping their child with school-related activities or homework (Patrícia, Klára). Even the parents of the most HL-fluent child stated that the only way to be of any use to their child when helping with homework was to switch to English and use the same terminology as introduced in school.

The parents' focus on English as *the* pathway to success and the positioning of the HL as a non-resource, had real consequences for parental practices and thus for children's HL learning and use. With this approach, it can be argued that the parents assisted in the process of HL loss by abandoning their HL efforts. Suarez (2002) described similar situations in which parents did not see Spanish as a potential

resource but, instead, as a potential interference with English. Only those parents who emphasized “that [the HL] is just as important for achieving the promises of a better life” (p. 528) were successful in Spanish HL maintenance. Similar scenarios are documented in the two successful cases in this study. Only Jarmila and Lucie seriously considered the possibility of moving back to Slovakia and, therefore, expected the children to need the HL. Their children learned more of the HL, including literacy skills, than the others. The expected future use of the HL proved an important resource for successful HL maintenance, confirming findings of Tse (2001a) on the importance of language vitality.

(2) Language practices (or lack thereof). Among the most successful language practices were consistent HL use in the home and regular, lengthy transnational trips and visits by grandparents to the United States. In addition, the overall number and variety of strategies used by the parents made a difference in the children’s HL proficiency.

Home language use. Most parents believed that consistently using the HL at home was an essential strategy for any HL learning, and they made attempts to be consistent. The families with two immigrant parents who both used the HL generally had no difficulties raising children who used the HL themselves, at least up until age 5 (Jarmila, Bohdana, Diana). The challenges came only after the child entered kindergarten or first grade and began shifting toward English. On the other hand, children in all-immigrant families whose parents used some or more English were much less fluent in the HL (Helena, Anděla).

For parents in mixed-marriage families, using the HL at home proved much more challenging. In all cases, it involved a conscious effort by the mother to limit her usage of English around the children. Still, even with consistent use of the HL use in the home (Milada, Radka), these families could not provide the children with enough exposure to the HL, resulting in the children never being fluent in the HL. Some mothers, facing numerous challenges, eventually used more English than they had planned

(Patrícia, Klára), resulting in even lower HL proficiency in their children. These findings support the literature on the importance of home language use (Bayley et al., 1996; Hakuta & D'Andrea, 1992; Tse, 2001b). However, even when both immigrant parents used the HL at all times, it did not prevent the children from eventually shifting toward English (Bohdana, Diana). The findings clearly show that multiple strategies must be pursued to ensure HL retention.

Regular, lengthy trips overseas. Total immersion in the HL overseas was perhaps the most powerful strategy parents could use for their children's HL development. Travel overseas served as a valuable resource for nine families (either at present or in the past), mainly because it provided the children with both the *need* to actively use the language and the *motivation* to keep learning. A number of parents even sent the children to a preschool or a camp when overseas to provide a complete immersion free of any English speakers. Children in families that never made prolonged visits (Stanislav, Helena) or stopped the practice at some point (Patrícia, Klára) were much less fluent than children in families which travel overseas at least every other year, even if only for a short period of time. The longer and the more frequent the visits, the stronger the impact on the children's fluency in the HL.

When families could not afford to travel overseas every year, they often brought grandparents to the United States to provide the children with as many opportunities to hear and use the HL as possible (Milada, Diana, Bohdana). Grandparents who did not understand any English proved to be the best resource, because children simply *had to* use the HL in any communication.

Given the strong importance of international trips and visits by grandparents in this sample, it is surprising how little the literature has taken note of these strategies (Kondo, 1997; Nesteruk, 2010; Rong, 2005). The roles of transnational trips and grandparents in HL maintenance have not been widely recognized. My findings suggest that the parents could not find sufficient resources and exposure to the HL in the United States, so they had to depend heavily on transnational resources. In this sense, their

transnationalism interrupts the assimilatory pressures of American society and provides a vital support for HL maintenance.

Unique HL practices. Neglecting an important strategy, though, did not necessarily prevent a family from achieving success. Jarmila, for instance, did not make significant use of transnational travel, and Lucie lived in a mixed-marriage home, where generally, the HL is used less around children. Success occurred when a unique set of strategies, suitable for the particular family, was in place. Among the strategies that aided higher HL proficiency in the children were delaying the start of preschool and learning of English, undertaking literacy instruction at home, and parents pretending to have no knowledge of English, not responding to children's requests made in English, helping the children find correct words in the HL, and positively rewarding children's effort at HL use. Additional activities included reading books in the HL to the children, using multimedia in the HL (movies, cartoons, music CDs, computer games), and utilizing unique strategies, such as employing a Czech *au pair*.

On the other hand, the major obstacles to parental efforts to maintain the HL included the parents being the only source of the language (only one parent in mixed-marriage families), not having enough time to spend with the children (when working outside the home), inconsistent HL use (constantly switching between languages was difficult for some mothers in mixed-marriage families), and feeling pressured to use English with the children (in school-related conversations, during visits by English-speaking friends, and at home in mixed marriages). Other obstacles were the absence of a language community or language school, the lack of or discontinued transnational trips, the children's preference for using English (children increasingly responding to parents in English), and the children developing a mostly American identity.

Interpreting Differences among Families

The number of different practices used in each family neatly explains the children's overall HL fluency, with Jarmila's child the most fluent, followed closely by those in the two all-immigrant families of Bohdana and Diana and then by Lucie. Parental motivations and language practices in the 11 families are summarized in table 15. Transnational trips are included only once, under "providing HL exposure."

Table 15. Differences among families

		<i>Jarmila</i>	<i>Bohdana</i>	<i>Diana</i>	<i>Lucie</i>	<i>Milada</i>	<i>Radka</i>	<i>Anděla</i>	<i>Patricia</i>	<i>Klára</i>	<i>Helena</i>	<i>Stanislav</i>
Providing HL Exposure	<i>Both parents CZ/SK</i>	XX	XX	XX				XX			XX	
	<i>Parent(s) use HL</i>	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	X(XX)	X(XX)	(XX)	(XX)	
	<i>Parent stayed home</i>	XX*	X	X	X		X**	X	X	X		
	<i>Transnational trips</i>	X	X	X	XX	X	X	X	(XX)	(XX)		
	<i>Grandparents visit</i>		XX	XX		XX						
	<i>CZ/SK friends in the U.S.</i>	XX	XX	X(XX)	XX	X	X		X		X	
	<i>Books and movies</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	(X)		
En-couraging Fluency	<i>Parents require that children use the HL</i>			X		X	X		(X)	(X)		
Pursuing Literacy	<i>Literacy instruction</i>	X		(X)	X	(X)	(X)		(X)	(X)		
Nurturing motivation	<i>Child's ethnic identity</i>	XX	X					XX				
	<i>Expected future use of HL</i>	XX	X		XX		X					
Total number of 'X'		15	13	11	11	8	7-8	8	4	1	3	0

XX Language practice strongly present

X Language practice partially present

(X), (XX) Language practice present in the past

* Son born in Slovakia.

** Radka's family used Slavic au-pairs instead of a full-day day care.

In Chapter 3 I outlined the children's HL fluency across families. The table is re-inserted here in a shortened format (table 16) to serve as a reference point to explaining the differences. The families are ranked based on the overall HL proficiency of their children from the most fluent to the least fluent.

Table 16. Children's proficiency in the HL

	<i>Children's current understanding of spoken HL</i>	<i>Children's current usage of spoken HL with mother*</i>	<i>Children's literacy skills in the HL</i>
<i>Jarmila</i>	Understands all	Always Slovak with mother and other Slovaks	Reading alone, writing with mistakes
<i>Bohdana</i>	Understand all	Mostly Slovak (slight difficulty expressing)	None (young children)
<i>Diana</i>	Understand all	Mostly Slovak (slight difficulty expressing)	Read very simple words
<i>Lucie</i>	Understand all	HL after a trip to Slovakia, then more English (difficulty expressing)	Reading and writing with mistakes
<i>Milada</i>	Understand all	Mixture of Slovak and English (difficulty expressing)	None
<i>Radka</i>	Understand all	Mixture of Czech and English (difficulty expressing)	Read very simple words
<i>Anděla</i>	Understand simple HL	Mixture of Czech and English (difficulty expressing)	Read very simple words
<i>Patrícia</i>	Understand simple HL	Very little HL (mostly English)	Read very simple words
<i>Klára</i>	Understand simple HL if spoken slowly	None (all English)	Read a very simple text
<i>Helena</i>	Able to guess a topic of conversation of a familiar topic	None (all English)	None
<i>Stanislav</i>	No understanding	None (all English)	None

* Children generally do not use the HL in the United States with anyone else than the parents with the exception of Jarmila's son and Bohdana's children, who are still very young. Both cases are all-Slovak families.

Relating the results in table 15 to the perceived proficiency of children (table 16) indicates the importance of the numerous strategies for HL maintenance: the more strategies used in a family the more fluent the children. In this section, I refer to tables 15 and 16 and highlight the multiplicity of experiences among the participant families, pointing out the ways in which the resources used in each family affected the children's HL proficiency.

Families with the most fluent children (Jarmila, Bohdana, Diana, Lucie). These four families used the most HL maintenance strategies, and the children are the most fluent in the sample. Lucie provided extra exposure to the HL through frequent transnational trips, while parents in the three all-immigrant families restricted children's early exposure to English.

Jarmila. Jarmila and Juraj achieved a high degree of fluency without relying heavily on transnational trips and grandparents. They travel only once every two years for approximately two weeks, and the grandparents do not visit the United States often. However, this family features a number of specific conditions, all different from the rest of the sample and all conducive to HL maintenance. First, the family came to the United States when their son was 4 years old and thus possessed a solid, basic knowledge of Slovak. The son is a 1.5-generation immigrant, not second generation, because he was not born in the United States. Previous literature confirms that age of arrival matters in HL maintenance (Rong & Preissle, 2009). In addition, Jarmila's son is the only child who did not attend any preschool.

Second, Jarmila and Juraj did not know any other Czech or Slovak families with young children. Instead of arranging playdates with English-speaking children, they typically met with Czech or Slovak adults in the area. This habit had several consequences for their son's language development. First, he was not around English-speaking children beyond the time spent in school. Second, he was not even around the children of other Czechs and Slovaks, who would typically use English during such family visits. Third, the Czech and Slovak adults *always* used Czech or Slovak when they met with Jarmila's family. Together, the limited encounters with other children and the frequent visits with Czech- or Slovak-speaking adults positively affected the boy's HL development. In addition, as an only child, he had a high degree of interaction with his parents and could not use English with a sibling, two conditions conducive to HL retention (Fillmore, 1991; Shin, 2002). Finally, Jarmila's son developed a strong ethnic identity and expects to use the HL in the future. He is pondering studying at a university in Prague, Czech Republic, and is determined to teach his own children the Slovak language in the future. No other family shared similar hopes or prospects for their children. Viewing the HL as a resource for the future (Tse, 2001a) proved to have a positive effect on retention.

Bohdana and Diana. In both these families, a large number of strategies were in place, and the children were highly fluent. The determinant factor for Bohdana's more fluent children was most likely their age. The children are still young (under 7), and thus, the parents can better control the linguistic environment, making every effort to use Slovak at home at all times (Fillmore, 1991; Nesteruk 2010). Still, children in both families are beginning to shift toward English and at times cannot express themselves in the HL. Until recently, Diana travelled to Slovakia with the children every summer for two months, which had contributed to a solid command of the HL together, along with the home use of only Slovak. Still, some crucial practices are weak or missing. The children's sense of ethnic identity is not as strong as in Jarmila's case, and travelling overseas is possible only every two years for two weeks (Diana) or for the summer (Bohdana). Bohdana is planning to work outside the home soon, which might further restrict the length of her travels in the future.

Lucie. Lucie's children are slightly less fluent in Slovak than children in the three families already discussed. However, considering that she lives in a mixed-marriage family and that her children are older (and thus exposed to more English inside and outside the home), her case can be seen largely as a success. Her daughters generally speak Slovak in Slovakia and then continue to use the HL for a period of time in the United States before slowly shifting back to using mostly English until the next trip overseas. Lucie is the only parent in the sample still able to take her children to Slovakia every year for the whole summer, which is the single most important strategy on which she relies. She hopes to move back with the family within several years, creating motivation for the children. In addition, Lucie enrolled her daughters in public schools in Slovakia, which serves as a reminder and driver for the family to work on Slovak literacy skills. No other parent used this truly transnational practice (Brittain, 2002). Furthermore, Lucie was also the only parent to have found a Slovak friend in the area whose children *spoke* Slovak, encouraging her daughters to use the language as well.

Families with semi-fluent children (Milada, Radka, Anděla). These three families form another group whose children have a medium level of proficiency. In each family, the children use some HL and some English with the mother throughout the year but have difficulties describing events and expressing complicated ideas in the HL. In each case, at least two major conditions for HL retention were missing. However, this absence was balanced, to a degree, by the using of other, less typical strategies.

Milada and Radka. Both mothers live in mixed-marriage families and work full time but make every effort to use as little English with the children as possible. In addition, the families cannot afford to travel overseas every year or to spend the whole summer abroad. Therefore, Milada and Radka found other strategies to support the HL. Milada puts pressure on the children to respond to her in Slovak. She pretends not to understand English “and then they know, ‘Okay, I probably should ask in Slovak because I am not gonna get what I want.’ ... And that works” (Milada). In addition, Milada brings her father who has no understanding of English to stay with the family for six months at a time, thus creating a need for the children to use Slovak. Radka tries to positively motivate her children, finding every opportunity to demonstrate the importance of knowing the Czech language. For instance, when the children express an interest in a specific topic, she often defers to a relative overseas, immediately picking up the phone and calling them, thus giving the children an opportunity to hear and use the HL. Radka also limited the children’s early exposure to English by employing *au pairs* from Slavic countries, including one from the Czech Republic, to care for the children. Furthermore, Radka made a conscious effort to find a school that valued cultural differences. Taking into account the resources available to Milada and Radka, their stories can be framed as successes. Still, both women have relatively young children (ages 0–7) and might have to adapt their strategies soon. They will not need an *au pair* when both children are in school, and the children might put up more resistance to the mother’s requests for HL use as they grow.

Anděla. Anděla does not expect her children (ages 11 and 6) to need Czech for anything other than communication with grandparents and perhaps being able to function when they visit the Czech Republic. She does not have high aspirations for her daughters' HL proficiency. Instead, she considers English to be the priority. She herself has long used a mixture of Czech and English, resulting in the same practice by her daughters. Among the factors contributing to HL maintenance, a sense of ethnic identity is present, both parents are Czech, and the family travels to the Czech Republic every year for a short visit.

Families with the least fluent children (Patrícia, Klára, Helena Stanislav). Each of these families could warrant a subsection of their own because their children's proficiency varies greatly, with Patrícia's daughter the most fluent and Stanislav's children understanding no Czech at all. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I have grouped these families together, focusing on the use of far fewer HL maintenance strategies and the children's less than medium proficiency.

Patrícia and Klára. Both mothers have older children (ages 8 and 16), live in a mixed-marriage families, and devoted much effort to HL maintenance in the past. Still, they have seen a strong shift toward English in their children. The girls in both families once annually visited overseas during the summer. However, the practice of long, yearly visits has either stopped entirely (Klára and Ken) or been interrupted (Patrícia and Paul). Both mothers find it difficult to maintain any reasonable level of HL fluency in their daughters without these trips, causing Klára to give up the tiring effort of speaking Czech at home entirely and Patrícia not to expect anything more than semi-fluency, unless they could resume their trips overseas. However, the children in both families expect to stay in the United States and are growing up feeling much more American than Czech or Slovak. In addition, in neither family do the grandparents visit the United States.

Helena and Stanislav. In these two families, most of the crucial factors for HL maintenance were missing. Although Helena and Hynek were both Czech, they decided early to speak English to the child in connection with the child entering daycare. Additionally, they do not travel overseas, and the grandparents do not visit the United States often and speak English when they *do* visit. Today, Helena's son can only understand the general topic of conversation in Czech. Helena believes transnational trips would have helped their son learn some Czech: "I think if he had been going to Czechoslo ... to the Czech Republic ... like for a visit ... but we don't have who to visit there ... that he would certainly speak." They visited only a couple of times for a short time period, and travel is becoming more difficult in terms of both finances and sufficient vacation time from work. Helena and Hynek's situation speaks to the literature about semi-lingualism or semi-literacy (Baker, 2011) because their son is having difficulties with English, having to repeat the end-of-grade tests. When a child does not acquire a solid, basic knowledge of at least one language, either the HL or English, it can lead to problems in both languages.

Stanislav never used Czech at home with his children, mostly because he prioritized his own English language learning over the children's HL proficiency, for which he saw no need in the United States. His children are native speakers of English with no understanding of Czech.

The stories of both Helena and Stanislav also share specific details: These parents immigrated to the United States before 1989, the year of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, and their initial English proficiency was rather low. Helena attended ESL classes in high school, and Stanislav spent his first few years in the United States focusing solely on English. They both suggested that they wanted to spare their children the painful experience of having to navigate the United States without a fluent command of English. Helena specifically expressed she had focused on English with her son because she did not want him to have to take ESL classes as she did.

Chapter 8: Discussion

Today, as well as in the past, the United States relies on a common language as the most important aspect of national unity; an American identity has come to mean English-monolingualism (Crawford, 2008). Immigrants from diverse backgrounds have been compelled to blend into the great melting pot and leave behind their culture and heritage, including their languages, as a sign of their patriotism to the new land (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Although first-generation immigrants tend to retain their native tongue for the rest of their lives, their children, the second generation, experience a different story. The pressures put on children in school to learn English as quickly as possible while neglecting the development of their HL lead to language shift and HL loss. Children of immigrants tend to lose their HL over time or to never learn it well, as documented in this study. The strong push for language assimilation is believed to be the main reason for language shift and loss among immigrants (Tse, 2001b). HLs are likely to be retained only when immigrant parents, an ethnic community, and a language school work together to support the language (Fishman, 2001).

Today, however, migration patterns are changing, and migrants often organize their lives not only around the host society but also other locations, such as their country of origin or other places worldwide, accepting a much more global understanding of their lives. Migrants today cross boundaries frequently, maintain ties across borders, use communication technologies, and migrate more than once in their lives, becoming true global citizens. To account for these new realities, transnational migration theory (Brittain, 2002) was adopted to study parental experience with HL use, maintenance, and loss. It enabled analyzing HL practices in the families across multiple contexts and locations. The central premise of this study was that, with the rise of globalization and changes in global migration patterns,

immigrant parents today might have both more *reasons* and more *resources* to counter the hegemony of English in the United States and to help children develop their HL (Tse, 2001b).

The main purpose of this dissertation was to gain insight into the parental language-related beliefs and practices of understudied populations (Robila, 2010) who have neither community nor language schools to support HL maintenance (Nesteruk, 2010). Additionally, both the Czech and the Slovak language have little global prestige, and many Czechs and Slovaks in the United States live in mixed marriages, two other factors lessening the likelihood of successful HL retention. Language use in mixed-marriage families, in particular, has not yet been explored in depth (Lam, 2011; Shin, 2010). As well, by focusing on the parents of young children, this study sheds light on parental roles in the process of language loss. While most previous research with immigrant parents was conducted in connection with language-school settings, this study explored parental goals, strategies, and practices in situations where no language school was available.

Theoretical Implications

The results have implications for the theoretical understanding of the processes of HL maintenance and loss among immigrants, contributing important findings about the role of immigrant parents and pointing out new conditions facilitating HL retention. The findings also provide grounds to challenge the ways in which most schools and society, but also immigrant parents themselves, approach HL and HL learners who are second-generation immigrants.

Confirming theories of HL loss. The examination of an untypical population of immigrants confirmed major aspects of language loss theory (Fishman, 1966; 2001; Veltman, 1983). HL loss, indeed, occurred in all families in this sample, although to varying degrees. Parental use of the HL and the birth order of children (Fillmore, 1991; Shin, 2002) played a role in the children's HL fluency. Only in one

family (Jarmila) did the child retain a fluent command of Slovak through age 15. Children in two families (Bohdana, Diana) were still using Slovak but increasingly shifting toward English even in conversation with the mother. These children were between the ages of 4 and 9, the critical period for HL maintenance. Age 5 was confirmed as the typical point of a significant shift toward English (Fillmore, 1991; Kouritzin, 1999; Nesteruk, 2010). All other children used mostly English with their parents while in the United States, but this tendency differed when the families visited overseas. Family composition proved to matter in the children's HL acquisition (Lam, 2011; Shin, 2010). Children in mixed-marriage families never became fluent in the HL, while children in traditional immigrant families reached HL fluency around age 3 or 4, if the parents used only the HL at home. In addition, parents' fluent command of the English language seemed to accelerate HL loss among children. This issue is worth exploring in depth in the future.

The findings of this study support previous research documenting a rapid language shift and show an even faster rate of language loss among the Czech and Slovak populations in the southeastern United States. According to Portes and Rumbaut (2001, p. 136), less than 10% of Asian- and European-origin second-generation children retain fluency in their parents' language, along with English, while 35% of Spanish-language speakers do so. Moreover, in generation 2.5, only 3% of White Europeans can be considered proficient in their mother tongue (Rumbaut et al., 2006). In this study, only 1 of 22 children (4.5%) grew up to be fully bilingual. However, this child was born in Slovakia and thus could be considered a 1.5-generation immigrant. From among the second- and 2.5-generation children in this study, none (0%) were fluent bilinguals. The children of Bohdana, Diana, and Lucie could use the Slovak language in Slovakia but chose to speak in English with their parents in the United States.

Maintenance is not enough: Refocus the debate on HLs. Earlier research suggested that the children of immigrants learn the HL within the family early and later begin losing it with increasing

exposure to English-speaking environments, such as schools. Along with this assumption, the debate on HLs has centered on the static notions of HL retention and maintenance. This study's findings suggest that this approach is insufficient for at least two reasons. First, children from mixed-marriage families might never gain fluent command of the HL, resulting in few skills to be maintained in the future. As documented in this study, all the children in mixed-marriage families were more fluent in English than the HL. The uneven language input of HL and English and the unequal prestige of the two languages were most likely the main reasons for the children's lack of fluency in the HL. Second, as a number of mothers noted, the children's command of the HL was often limited to home-related topics and interactions. The mothers' concern was not necessarily how to maintain what the children already knew but rather how to *develop* and *expand* their vocabulary and language use across contexts. Therefore, current scholarship on HLs must move away from an emphasis on the static and unchanging focus on maintenance to a more fluid conception of HL improvement, expansion, and development. Children who never become fluent in the HL have little to maintain.

The power of English (and the resulting powerlessness of the HLs) was best manifested in the children's language development. When the two languages were learned at the same time through the process of simultaneous bilingualism, as in mixed-marriage families, the stronger presence and prestige of the English language overshadowed the children's HL learning. Only when learning English was postponed (typically in all-immigrant families in a process of sequential bilingualism) did the children reach fluency in the HL by the age of 3 or 4. These findings show that, if HLs are to be learned, the children need a strong head start in the home language before they begin learning English. The stronger HL basics the children develop early, the greater probability that they will retain the language, as documented in cases of Jarmila, Diana, and Bohdana whose children are the most fluent in the sample.

The situation might differ for language groups with established ethnic communities, where the HL is used also outside the home.

Complicating the role of parents. Most parents in this study highly valued the HL. However, contrary to beliefs that parents tend to insist on HL maintenance at all costs, this dissertation documented more ambivalent parental approaches, as also observed by Tse (2001b). Parents had multiple goals for their children, which at times they perceived as incompatible. For example, all parents placed a strong emphasis on the children's acquisition and fluent command of English. Many parents viewed the two goals of learning the HL and learning English as interfering with one another. In such situations, parents encountered the dilemma of whether to proceed with HL maintenance. All parents held that HL learning could not happen at the expense of the children learning English. For some parents, this belief meant reducing their HL expectations (Patrícia, Milada); for others, it meant abandoning the HL efforts altogether (Helena, Klára). Only in two families (Jarmila, Lucie) did the parents not perceive acquisition of the two languages as mutually exclusive, and the children from these families were the only ones in the study to achieve any literacy in the HL, in addition to the ability to speak the HL. Thus, many parents' perceptions might have contributed to their children's HL loss. A similar situation was documented among Spanish HL speakers: Families who viewed maintenance of Spanish as potentially hindering other goals, such as the acquisition of English, all shifted away from Spanish (Suarez, 2002).

Viewing HLs and English as rivals. The positioning of the two languages as competitors reflects, to a degree, the rhetoric of the English-only movement in which other languages are framed as a hindrance to English (Lee & Suarez, 2009; Wiley & Lee, 2009). Lee (2009), for example, reported that Native American youth receive mixed messages about the importance of retaining their cultural and linguistic knowledge and the importance of English for achieving success in life. For the Native youth, "often the two are perceived to be in opposition, as though one cannot be both successful in the larger

society while also maintaining Native languages and cultural lifeways” (Lee, 2009, p. 308). As such, it might be that parents in this study internalized the messages from the larger society and its institutions and focused primarily on English. However, such messages conflict with the literature documenting that language skills are transferable and that maintenance of the HL does not interfere with English language acquisition. The retention of HL while learning English has been proven to have multiple positive effects (Cummins, 1986; García, 2009; Gibson, 1988).

In fact, there was a degree of contradiction between parents’ approaches to the two languages (practices) and general beliefs (ideas) about bilingualism. Specifically, two paradoxical situations were common to a number of participants: 1) Most parents mentioned that exposure to HL would help children more easily learn other languages. At the same time, parents often discontinued or postponed literacy efforts in the HL precisely because they believed it was interfering with their children’s learning of English. 2) Parents in 10 families expressed that bilingualism has cognitive and academic benefits for children. In reality, however, they often framed the perfection of English language skills (not bilingualism) as the most important asset for their children’s future. Specifically, the parents were concerned with their children’s academic success as measured by their performance *in English*.

Why then did the parents, through their actions, choose English *over* HL maintenance and bilingualism? It appears that, when referring to *bilingualism*, the parents meant the type of bilingualism (Valdés, 2001) in which the child is fully proficient in and has perfect command of English and knows an *additional* language. The ability to use another language is desirable but not at the expense of learning English. Similarly, Glenn (n.d.) reported that Mexican-American parents surveyed by the Educational Testing Service in 1987 perceived learning Spanish as an important goal, but not if it took away from learning English. This positioning reveals the differential power of languages as perceived by the immigrant parents themselves. Parents focused primarily on English as a means for children to excel in

school and larger society (dominant pressures) and to be equipped with a universally useful language (global pressures). In comparison, the transnational pressure to teach the children the HL was much weaker, perhaps because the HL was expected to have a significantly less usefulness in the children's lives than English.

Complicating the consequences of language loss. Earlier literature (Carreon et al., 2005; Fillmore, 1991; Kouritzin, 1999) suggested that, when the HL is not maintained, children and their parents cannot communicate fluently, and family relationships and children's identity formation are affected negatively. It is important to note that these findings were based mainly on research with populations among which parental command of the English language typically was low, such as Mexican, Hmong, early Polish and other European-origin immigrants.

In contrast, the present study has shown that communication between parents and children was not hindered as a result of HL loss. In some cases, even parents preferred using English precisely to maintain fluent communication between parents and children. In fact, communication was disrupted when parents insisted upon children's usage of the HL. The findings of this study suggest that, when parents have a strong command of English, misunderstandings need not occur if children cease to use and understand the HL. Although the participant families in this study found a common language, the very feasibility of using English at home likely contributed to HL loss in the children.

The role of children. Children in this study were described as active agents in making decisions about home language use. The children not only decided what language they would use at home with their parents but even successfully requested that the parents speak English. In one case, even the grandparents learned basic English to be able to communicate with their grandchildren. Previous research by Kondo (1997) called attention to the fact that "mother's choices [alone] cannot determine children's behavior" (p. 369). In other words, children do not always embrace and act upon their

parents' plans and practices. Additionally, Tuominen (1999) documented, children might have quite a different agenda and refuse to learn the HL, often failing to see any relevance to their lives.

Generally, parents encountered opposition to their efforts at HL maintenance and engaged in numerous negotiations with their children. However, each parent dealt with their children's choices and preferences in unique ways. Milada refused to read books in English altogether, while Patrícia obtained a Slovak translation of Disney fairy tales to make the reading attractive and understandable for her daughter. Klára attempted to make her daughter speak Czech by not paying attention to her if she spoke in English. However, Klára and others soon learned that their children would not share their thoughts, joys, and worries if pressed to use only the HL. Klára now communicates with her daughter entirely in English. Milada and Diana let the children use English when the subject was too difficult for them and then rephrased their stories using Slovak. On the other hand, Anděla avoided difficult words in Czech herself and never required (or expected) her daughters to know those expressions. In addition, many parents conceded to using English when helping their children with homework, although they all had planned to use only the HL with their children.

Overall, children's reactions often determined how much of the HL was used in the family and whether literacy activities were a success or major challenge. The parents could influence the situation only by nurturing motivation for HL learning in the children themselves, which was done most successfully through summer-long visits overseas.

Transnationalism and HL maintenance. Transnationalism complicates the assumption that immigrants gradually adopt the values and practices (such as language use) of the host country and leave behind their ethnic ways. Transnational theory holds that people's actions are often motivated by contexts outside the country in which they reside (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995) and thus challenge the centrality of the nation as the fundamental unit of analysis. Instead, to understand the lives of people in

a globalized world, we need to consider their lives globally—including their links to and knowledge of societies and communities abroad.

It is generally recognized that some children, mostly from Mexico, travel abroad for part of the year. Teachers often negatively perceive these visits as interrupting the children's schooling experiences in the United States. The concerns are that the children do not practice English during these times and often miss a portion of the school year. Hardly ever are such transnational experiences viewed positively as a form of learning to better understand today's globalized world and one's own place in it (Sanchez & Kasun, 2012). Few researchers in education and linguistics have attempted to approach children as people living their lives internationally or to use transnationalism as a lens to understand how they make decisions about language learning and use.

In HL learning specifically, the role of the transnational context must be acknowledged and considered in order to capture the plurality of people's lived experiences and pursuits. In the United States, HLs are still perceived as a hindrance to success in schools and the wider society. I argue that this occurs because educators and social institutions have failed to notice the transnational involvement of many immigrants, as well as of U.S. citizens (as documented by Sanchez & Kasun, 2012), and stubbornly refuse to look beyond the national borders for explanations and, perhaps, inspiration. This study's findings show the importance of the transnational context for HL learning. Namely, HLs are best learned abroad outside the United States, and the most significant of motivation is anticipated use of the HL overseas.

Transnationalism's challenge to the factors of HL retention. Previous literature identified home language use, the presence of an ethnic community and a language school, and the prestige of the language as the most consistent predictors of HL retention (Fishman, 1991; Tse, 2001b). All these conditions have one characteristic in common: They are all aspects of the immigrant's life within the

United States and do not recognize any cross-border ties or exchanges that might support HL maintenance. Within the traditional migration theory of assimilation, this assumption is logical, because the migrant is thought to break all ties with the sending country and focus primarily on adapting to the American, English-monolingual society. One reason why I chose to study Czech and Slovak immigrants was precisely that they likely lacked most of the crucial factors for HL retention.

The premise of this study was that migrant populations no longer simply exchange one home country for another, one language for another. Instead, they gain a greater understanding of the world as a whole and perhaps consider themselves to be global citizens, instead of as citizens of any single nation. Such identification was expected to have consequences for the place of HLs in the lives of individuals today. When pursuits, loyalties, and job placements span boundaries, people might be more likely to consider HLs as a resource and to find new ways to maintain a working knowledge of the HL. In other words, both the motivation and resources available for HL maintenance might be different in transnational times.

The examples of the more successful families in the sample indeed challenge the established assumptions of what is needed to maintain an HL. While home language use by parents was certainly crucial, children in some mixed-marriage families, which had much smaller HL input than traditional immigrant families, managed to gain a surprisingly high command of the HL (Lucie, Milada, Radka). The two conditions found to be vital to HL retention were long and frequent visits abroad and treating the HL as a resource, both of which are aspects of transnationalism.

Earlier research did not widely acknowledge the vital importance of transnational trips (Kondo, 1997; Rong, 2005) or sustained contact with grandparents (Nesteruk & Marks, 2009) for HL maintenance. All families who traveled saw an increase in children's fluency after each trip, followed by a shorter shift back to English until the next visit. Many parents in this study believed that, without these

trips, their children's fluency would be much lower (Lucie, Diana, Bohdana). Other parents saw a decline in the children's HL fluency when the trips were discontinued or interrupted for more than two years (Klára, Patrícia), and even Helena was convinced that her son would speak Czech had he visited the Czech Republic. Visiting grandparents also proved to be effective at boosting the children's fluency (used mainly by Milada, Diana, and Bohdana). Both strategies were adopted to increase language exposure in a natural environment. Placing children in summer camps in the Czech Republic and visiting with grandparents who have no knowledge of English proved the best strategies for HL maintenance.

The second most important condition of HL retention in the transnational context was treating the HL as a vital resource for the children's future. Parents who expected their children to need the HL beyond communication with grandparents organized their resources and time so that the children learned not only oral but also literacy skills in the HL (Jarmila, Lucie). None of the remaining nine families expected that the HL would play an important role in the children's future lives. The importance of expected future use of the HL supports the findings of Tse (2001b) on language vitality. However, in this study, the potential practicality of the HL is tied exclusively to contexts outside the United States. In other words, the vitality of the HL is derived from transnational social spaces, not the dominant society. As these two major conditions (travel and expected future language use) stem from transnational context, I argue that the transnationalism of today's immigrant parents has the strong potential to overcome the pressures of language assimilation.

Redefine HLs as future oriented and practical. Based on the importance of one core factor contributing to HL retention (expected future use of the HL), I join other researchers (Cummins, 2005; García, 2005; Valdés, 2005) who seek to change how schools and society approach HLs in order to send a positive message about linguistic diversity to immigrant-origin children and their families. Learning a language requires hard work. If children and parents are to put effort and time into learning a language

other than English, they need to see the benefits. However, educational policies, schools, and the general public still too often view HLs as barriers to success as the prevalence of the English-only rhetoric remains strong (Lee & Suarez, 2009).

A number of researchers have proposed that HLs must be approached as resources (Cummins, 2005) relevant and useful for children's learning and academic achievement (Valdés, 2001; 2005). These proposals are situated within additive acculturation theory, which suggests that children's heritage culture and language should be valued and included in the classroom. The major shortcoming of this theory is that it is mostly concerned with children's academic achievement as measured by the criteria of U.S. monolingual education. In other words, HLs and cultures are valued as only instruments for children's smooth adaptation to and participation in the dominant society.

Transnational theories challenge this view by recognizing that many people's lives (personal, professional, virtual) span borders and continents. To best prepare children for living in the globalized world and being competitive worldwide, educators and policy-makers must recognize the need for learning multiple languages and understanding multiple cultural codes. Authorities must not only allow languages other than English to be spoken in schools, communities, and families but must also treat them as true assets, as transnational or transcultural (Triandafyllidou, 2009) capital with deep utility. We can no longer close our eyes to the global dimension of human lives. Skills need to be judged by their utility, not within a single nation, but for one's life on a globe scale. In a globalized world, multilingual children are needed as cultural interpreters in politics, business, science, and within family circles. If we continue to treat HLs as simply referring to one's past, one's *heritage*, we fail to prepare children for their future.

Conceptualize "second generation immigrants" as "transnational Americans." In discussing the ethnic identity of parents and children, it became clear that the children consider themselves to be

Americans first and foremost. Parents recognized this generational shift in ethnic identification, while often hoping that their child would retain some degree of identification with parents' home country. Supporting previous research (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Zhou, 1997), all parents, perhaps with the exceptions of Jarmila and Anděla, realized with a sense of loss that their children considered America their home. Children often opposed the ethnic and cultural practices of their parents precisely because these unique cultural ways threatened the children's American identity. Many children strove to belong with their American peers, refusing to bring ethnic food to school or to speak the HL. However, when overseas, the same children made an effort to blend in with the Czech or Slovak culture, often striving not to use any English at all. The children's concern with uniformity and the perceived need to blend in with the White English-speaking mainstream as a prerequisite for social inclusion is a troublesome finding in the age of super-diversity (Wiley, 2014).

Children receive messages about Americanness from media, teachers, and peers. Today, both schooling practice and educational research conceptualize ethnic and linguistic diversity as direct links to (or demonstration of) *immigrant* culture, heritage, and roots. Migration scholars (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut, 2009; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2010) use terms such as second-, third-, 2.5-, and 3.5-generation immigrants, measuring the extent to which these populations are *unlike* the majority of White Americans in cultural practices and language use. Conceptualizing diverse cultural and linguistic skills as aspects of the children's immigrant status delegitimizes their American citizenship. Indeed, the children make efforts to not demonstrate any of these immigrant-like traits in order to obtain social acceptance in the United States.

To allow for greater inclusion of the U.S.-born children of immigrants, both research and education practice must cease to treat these children as (a generation of) immigrants, as outsiders. Instead, we must see these children as American citizens with valuable transnational skills and resources

(both cultural and linguistic) needed in the 21st century. Cervantes and Kasun (forthcoming) propose the term “American transnational people” to acknowledge both these children’s citizenship and their cosmopolitan cultural capital. Similarly, Sanchez and Kasun (2012) suggest that transnationals are better prepared to handle the demands of the globalizing world than monolingual and monocultural children and argue that including their transnational experiences into the classroom could enrich curriculum. In the 21st century, diversity has yet to be redefined as a true asset for, not an obstacle to, becoming an American (Tse, 2001b). For this to happen, we must reconsider what it means to be an American. One option is to move away from the emphasis on uniformity in race, language, and culture as a defining trait of being American and, instead, emphasize the deeper values of freedom and equal rights and the obligations of each and every citizen. In such a definition, HLs would not pose a challenge to one’s Americanness but, instead, would represent a useful form of capital.

Race and HL loss. Children’s ready identification with the mainstream and parental encounters with racial stereotypes in schools point to the role race might play in HL maintenance and loss. Some scholars (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) claim that White immigrants tend to Americanize faster, perhaps because they are not visibly different from the White middle class in the American racial system. Critical Whiteness theories (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004) describe and analyze whiteness as a property, an asset or privilege that can be exchanged for material goods and advantages. Indeed, in this study, many children attempted to align themselves with the White majority of their peers and teachers and to escape any form of othering by hiding their cultural differences, such as ethnic foods and HL. On average, the children did a very good job because most teachers were unaware that the children spoke another language at home and assumed that no culturally relevant pedagogy was needed. Some teachers did not even notice a child’s insufficient command of English until the mother requested that the child receive ESL classes. Teachers’ ignorance and reliance on stereotypes, such as a belief that only Latin American

and Asian American children come from different cultures and speak languages other than English, point to the salience of race as a social category in the United States. In fact, one mother reported that, because she was White, she received advice from the school staff *not to* specify that her child spoke another language in order to avoid being placed in ESL classes. Clearly, children of White immigrants can use their race as a property to navigate the social system. The question then is: What do children have to leave behind? Most likely, both their HL and ethnic identification must be hidden to fully claim and use their Whiteness as a property. Although parents might not see the social importance of race in the United States because they come from cultures where other social criteria play major roles in social stratification, their U.S.-born children might be much more sensitized to this construct.

However, parents might feel that their Eastern European origins should be hidden for their children to achieve success in the United States because of the problematic political relationship between western countries and the Eastern European countries that once belonged to the Soviet bloc. While none of the parents in this study specifically expressed this belief, they insisted upon being approached as Czechs or Slovaks, not Russians, perhaps because of the geo-political situation and long-standing problematic relationship between Russia and the United States. Therefore, Eastern European immigrants might choose to hide their culture and roots in the United States to avoid being associated with Russia. A theory of xeno-racism (Fekete, 2001; Harewood, 2006) was recently developed in Europe to address this new form of racism: societal hostility against people from different geo-political regions. The increased migration from Eastern to Western European countries raised concerns that the new immigrants might be taking jobs from the domestic population and led to hostility against migrant workers, such as against Poles, Slovaks, and Czechs in Great Britain and Germany. This study did not specifically explore the role of race, but the relations between HL retention, ethnic identification, and race deserve more attention in future research.

Differences between Czech and Slovak families. Related to the discussion of race and ethnicity in HL maintenance are the differences between Czech and Slovak families. This study was not designed to explain differences between these two ethnic groups, which were considered to have highly similar country sizes, U.S. immigration population, history, culture, and language. Surprisingly, however, the four families with the most fluent children were all Slovak (mixed marriage and all immigrant), while the three families with the least fluent children were all Czech (mixed marriage and all immigrant).

Due to the study's design, I can only speculate on the reasons for these differences. One hypothesis pertains to the immigrants' plans for the future. Early 20th-century accounts reported that Slovak immigrants tended to stay in the United States only temporarily in order to earn enough money to purchase land in their homeland. Immigrants from Czech lands, though, typically came to the United States with the intent to settle and stay permanently (FERENCE, 1993). It would be intriguing to conduct a survey and collect data from large numbers of current Czech and Slovak immigrants about their plans to stay in the United States or return to their sending country.

A second hypothesis involves the finding that HLs were valued mainly as a means of communication with extended family. It is plausible that Slovaks, on average more religious than Czechs, might more strongly value family ties and consequently put more emphasis on children's HL maintenance. Among Slovaks, 62% identify as Roman Catholics, 6% as Protestants, and 4% as Greek Catholics (Juhaščíková, Škápik, & Štukovská, 2012), while only 10% of all Czechs identify as Roman Catholics but 80% as non-religious (Czech Statistical Office, 2011). Both hypotheses should be examined in future research.

Practical Implications

The results of this study suggest a number of ways in which HL retention could be better promoted among children of immigrants, with implications for U.S. educational policy and schooling practice, Czech and Slovak education experts and governments, and immigrant parents.

Implications for education policy and practice in U.S. public schools. Parents are a major resource in HL maintenance but often feel overwhelmed by the complexities of the task. Support from authorities, such as schools, could make parents' efforts much easier. Neither Czech nor Slovak is considered a critical foreign language by the U.S. government, resulting in limited support for language instruction and scholarship programs (Hrouda, 2011). However, public schools can help immigrant parents and children in other ways.

- Teachers need to become aware that their students might speak another language at home. Specifically, they should see past the notion that only Latino and Asian children speak an HL and recognize that White students might also come from families with diverse cultural backgrounds. Racial stereotypes are prevalent not only within the general population but also among educators.
- Teachers should realize that the language experiences of not only students *lacking English proficiency* but all immigrant-origin students deserve special attention, even if they have good English skills.
- Schools should promote a positive view of bilingualism and support parental efforts by motivating children to learn their HL; schools should become advocates for HL maintenance.
- Schools should cultivate a general understanding that, in the many countries of the world, people speak different languages, hold different values, and have distinct cultural understandings of certain situations. Only one parent in this study reported a positive

experience with the children's school in this regard. Increased global awareness in schools would validate the parents' ethnic cultures and languages for the children and their peers.

In recent years, a number of researchers (Cummins, 2005; Fillmore, 2000; Valdés, 2005) have called for educators to become advocates for native language maintenance in immigrant families in order to prevent HL loss. The findings of my study support their claims, documenting the persistent disconnect between parental efforts at HL maintenance and the official educational goals for immigrant-origin students' rapid assimilation in the United States.

Implications for Czech and Slovak education experts. Countries of origin could also become major players in the language education of immigrant-origin children. In transnational times, crossing boundaries has become more common not only for immigrants but also for governmental institutions, as they reach out to their citizens abroad. In fact, many of the Czech and Slovak community language schools operating in the United States receive funding from the Czech and Slovak governments. The Czech and Slovak governments and language experts could take further steps to aid in HL maintenance.

- Create language materials for Czech and Slovak HL learners
 - Books and textbooks that use a more accessible (simpler) language but have content (or storyline) interesting to older children
 - Interactive online language lessons/classes to be used by HL learners at home
 - Educational, children-appropriate YouTube channels in Czech or Slovak
- Create a virtual venue for parents interested in HL maintenance to obtain information about HL resources and to connect with others in their geographic area, perhaps as a consular service to Czech and Slovak citizens living in the United States. Many parents in this study reported not knowing other co-nationals, especially when their children were young and needed friends for playdates.

The Senate of the Czech Republic recently realized the potential to attract experienced professionals living abroad to return to the Czech Republic as part of efforts to stop the so-called brain drain. In the fall of 2013, the Czech Senate hosted a conference on Czech citizens living abroad discussing their needs and possible ways to address them. One strategy suggested at this meeting was to improve the services for the Czech language education of children living abroad (Broucek & Grulich, 2014). As well, Czech officials at the Consulate in Los Angeles are open to talks about sponsoring Czech language education for the children of Czech citizens in California (personal Communication, S. Kresin). Altogether, there seems to be the political will to tackle the issue of Czech language learning abroad.

Implications for immigrant parents. Parents who wish to teach an HL to their children and do not have access to ethnic community resources, such as a language school, could benefit from the following knowledge.

- The three core strategies most likely lead to HL maintenance are
 - Frequent and lengthy transnational trips and sustained contact with grandparents
 - Parent(s) using the HL even if children respond in English
 - Conceiving of a practical use for the HL (such as working in an international company, becoming a language teacher/expert, and having rich experiences in a college study-abroad program), in other words, treating the HL as a resource
- HL retention is possible even if one of these conditions is missing. Instead of focusing on a single practice, individual families should find and use a mixture of strategies that suits them. Families in this study proved quite imaginative, contracting *au pair* and pretending to have no knowledge of English. Additional strategies include
 - Utilizing online resources, such as language apps for tablets and iPhones
 - Enrolling a child in college language classes while still attending high school

- Parents should openly communicate with their children’s teachers to explain their HL strategies and goals. If parents are not proactive, teachers might never know about the home HL efforts. Open communication between teachers and parents is vital.
- The HL and English need not be perceived as in opposition. Although learning two languages simultaneously requires more energy and time than learning only one language, parents need to realize that HL proficiency has numerous long-term benefits for children. If children perceive these benefits, they might have stronger motivation to learn and use the HL.
- Parents need to connect with others. The results show that a number of parents in one geographical area were interested in literacy activities for their children and in finding additional venues for the children to use the HL. Coming together for various occasions might prove a helpful strategy for HL maintenance. Families can
 - Organize a reading club and take turns teaching the children basic literacy skills, possibly through play, such as using flashcards or signs with short words as part of a game and challenging children to find antonyms on the flashcards.
 - Arrange movie nights with discussions about the film in order to utilize the tendency of children to discuss the issue in the language in which they learned about it.
 - Organize other collective events using as much audio and print material in the HL as possible.

Limitations

The very choice of a research methodology naturally confines the researcher to view a topic through a specific lens. The nature of qualitative inquiry is to provide insight into the phenomenon under study; therefore, I do not intend to generalize the findings of this dissertation to all immigrant

children, not even to all Czech and Slovak-origin children in the United States. The purpose of this research was to uncover important issues related to HL maintenance and loss in specific conditions (geographically dispersed and understudied populations lacking crucial HL resources), not to predict patterns of language behavior.

Additionally, this study is based on theoretical frameworks from sociology, anthropology, and applied linguistics and provides a critical understanding of HL maintenance from a sociological perspective. However, it does not focus on linguistic aspects of the process. Some specific limitations resulting from the design and the scope of this study are as follows.

- No children or teachers were interviewed for this study, because it focused primarily on parents and their perspectives and experiences. Direct observation of children in a school setting and interviewing children might yield additional distinct findings and conclusions.
- As a result of the small number of Czechs and Slovaks in the area, the sample did not have great variation in socioeconomic status (in terms of education, income, or parents' English proficiency).
- The scope of the study prevented comparison with Czech/Slovak immigrants *living within a community* (e.g., NYC, Texas, Nebraska), although such a comparison would be intriguing.
- A comparison between different language groups (such as Czech/Slovak versus Hungarian, Finnish, or Italian) would be desirable to uncover cultural differences across language groups.
- Instead of adopting a longitudinal design, this study provides insight into immigrants' lives at one point in time. To study the *process* of HL loss, a longitudinal design would be preferable.

Future Research

Further research could expand upon this study in a number of ways. Future investigations should include the perspectives of children and teachers; compare HL use, maintenance, and loss across language groups; and pay more attention to extra- and within-group differences. The usage of Czech in a historically Czech community in Texas (Dutkova-Cope, 2006), for example, is likely to vary significantly from the language realities of the parents in this study. First, the presence of a community changes the language dynamic both within and outside the families. Second, aspects of the language are likely to differ, because language communities tend to create new language over time. Typically, some expressions in these communities are Americanized, while others would be deemed archaic in the modern-day Czech Republic.

Another interesting question involves the distinct roles of mothers and fathers in HL maintenance, an effect best studied in mixed-marriage families. In this dissertation, the only mixed-marriage family with an immigrant father was the one family in which the HL was never used. In the other mixed-marriage families, the immigrant mothers exerted much effort to teach their children the HL. More research is needed to examine the roles of immigrant mothers and fathers in HL maintenance.

Future research attempting to describe the *process* of language maintenance and shift should utilize a longitudinal research design. For example, exploring the motivations and practices of parents over time would allow researchers to determine whether some motivations for HL maintenance (such as door to other languages, cognitive benefits, and appreciation of cultural differences) are present from the very beginning or appear as justifications if fluency in the HL is not achieved. Longitudinal design would enable tracing shifts in meanings and changes in the perspectives, goals, and practices of parents and children over time.

In addition, the findings of this study raise at least three major questions regarding the process of HL loss. First, the impact of parental English proficiency on HL maintenance is unclear. While this study suggests that parental fluency in English might speed HL loss in children, more research on this topic is needed.

Second, amid the transnational activities of many migrants today and the global hierarchy and prestige of languages, the interplay between higher- and lower-power languages across contexts emerges as an interesting subject for in-depth research. In this dissertation, I explored the situation of Czech and Slovak HLs in a society where the dominant language is a global language. How would Czech and Slovak HL maintenance look in a country where the dominant language is *not* a global language, such as Finland, Italy, or Greece? On the other hand, what would HL maintenance look like in a situation where the HL *is* a global language and the dominant language *is not*, such as English as an HL among American immigrants to the Czech Republic? Nyíri (2006) investigated educational practices of Chinese transnational migrants in Hungary and found that parents often opted for a private school to help their children learn English, *instead of* Hungarian (the dominant language of the country). The parents perceived the global prestige of English and decided to neglect the Hungarian language entirely.

The third question worth exploring in the future is whether and how HLs can be revitalized for persons who have lost most of the language. Although HL loss is generally depicted as a one-way process of decreasing fluency, the findings of this study have shown that HL command waxes and wanes, depending on the opportunities and language exposure available at any given time. During transnational trips, children's fluency increases significantly compared to the time between the trips when their ability to use the language visibly decreases. What does it take then to regain proficiency in a language once lost? Moreover, are languages among immigrants becoming lost or merely *falling asleep*? Questions such as these could provide a research agenda for a lifetime.

APPENDIX 1: Numbers of people with Czech and Slovak ancestry in the U.S. in 2010

	CZ speakers	SK speakers	CZ heritage	SK heritage	Czechoslovak heritage
USA	55 382	32 227	872 714	469 456	198 504
Alabama	242	85	2 408	1 004	1 596
Alaska	122	14	1 507	526	794
Arizona	928	416	12 948	5 304	6 117
Arkansas	301	36	3 224	822	1 467
California	5 563	2 363	45 886	15 940	29 061
Colorado	1 325	293	15 782	4 141	7 132
Connecticut	558	1 548	5 849	13 907	5 657
Delaware	100	69	956	1 189	753
D.C.	33	40	817	403	223
Florida	4 145	2 223	26 129	20 251	18 075
Georgia	929	410	5 443	3 430	3 749
Hawaii	260	26	943	289	534
Idaho	45	0	3 342	416	1 705
Illinois	5 162	3 057	70 366	26 761	20 578
Indiana	301	448	7 162	14 452	4 451
Iowa	1 156	45	31 912	929	6 472
Kansas	437	31	11 460	1 042	3 685
Kentucky	146	32	1 815	1 215	1 372
Louisiana	156	0	2 184	621	1 243
Maine	168	70	949	980	658
Maryland	606	536	10 923	7 453	5 989
Massachusetts	1 472	849	5 492	3 922	3 273
Michigan	1 326	866	22 580	18 121	14 849
Minnesota	2 084	274	45 086	4 327	11 587
Mississippi	0	25	821	314	500
Missouri	398	265	14 262	3 080	5 264
Montana	199	16	3 719	652	1 733
Nebraska	2 498	29	54 280	535	7 831
Nevada	557	24	4 137	1 569	2 079
New Hampshire	191	19	1 069	888	926
New Jersey	1 633	4 294	12 588	28 986	12 978
New Mexico	142	63	2 577	788	1 346
New York	3 999	3 097	23 955	24 377	21 457
North Carolina	866	377	5 622	4 593	3 448
North Dakota	469	0	6 775	242	1 356
Ohio	1 473	2 533	35 256	100 310	18 270
Oklahoma	307	30	8 020	728	3 908
Oregon	664	571	9 941	1 692	4 840
Pennsylvania	804	4 508	20 558	160 822	21 189
Rhode Island	72	50	393	503	579
South Carolina	169	300	2 550	1 940	1 661
South Dakota	557	6	10 101	71	1 635
Tennessee	404	67	3 396	1 796	1 880
Texas	8 748	702	110 299	6 563	26 148
Utah	422	187	2 077	633	1 087
Vermont	88	128	837	477	561
Virginia	691	356	9 886	7 989	5 760
Washington	1 172	473	14 615	3 310	6 877
West Virginia	99	32	1 511	2 938	1 184
Wisconsin	1 156	364	50 411	8 762	9 223
Wyoming	39	16	2 243	209	726

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

APPENDIX 2: Community-based language classes in Czech and Slovak (not exhaustive)

Czech and Slovak School Comenium (Founded 2008) <http://www.comenium.org/>

Location: Greater Philadelphia, PA

Classes: 1:30-3:30 on Saturdays

Czech and Slovak School (2009)

<http://czechmatediary.com/2009/10/26/new-czech-and-slovak-school-in-portland/>

Location: Portland, OR

Classes: Daily 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM for children 6 weeks up until 6 years of age.

Czech and Slovak Language school for adults and children (1989)

http://www.panix.com/~czslha/CzSkola/class_details.php

http://www.panix.com/~czslha/CzSkola/Detsky_Skola_Flyer_2012-2013.pdf

Location: Baltimore, MD

Classes: Once a week

Czech and Slovak School (open house 2010) <http://www.slavicamericansokol.org/school.html>

Location: McLean, VA (larger DC area)

Classes: An hour a week for adults and children, preschool children Sat 10-12.

Czech School (2012) <http://czechschoolsandiego.com/>

Location: San Diego, CA (2 locations: Rancho Santa Fe, El Cajon)

Classes: 90 minutes once a week

Czech School West Coast <http://cswc.us/>

Location: Orange Country, CA

Classes: 1 hour a week for adults, 9AM-2PM one day a week for 3-5 year olds

Czech School of California (2012) <http://www.czechschoolofcalifornia.com/www/en/>

Location: San Francisco and Lafayette, CA

Classes: Once a week: mothers & babies club, preschool classes, school classes, CZ for foreigners

Czech classes at the Czech Center in NYC <http://new-york.czechcentres.cz/news/czech1/>

Location: NYC

Classes: 90 minute classes once a week

Czech school <http://unitedmoraviansocieties.org/czechschool.html>

Location: Glendale Heights, IL

Classes: Beginner/intermediate course for 4 year olds and older, 2 hours a week

The Slovak School for Children <http://www.slovakschool.com/>

Location: Cleveland, OH

Classes: Once a week for 2 hours (instruction time expanded in 2012)

APPENDIX 3: Recruitment Letter

Name of Study: The experiences of Central European immigrants raising bilingual children in the U.S.

Eligibility Criteria: Immigrant parents from Czech Republic or Slovakia and their spouses (either U.S.-born and foreign-born). Parents must have one or more children between ages 3 and 17.

Investigator: Marta McCabe

Dear Parent,

I would like to invite your participation in a research study about immigrant parents' experiences with raising bilingual children in the U.S. This study is conducted as part of doctoral research training and will result in a dissertation at the School of Education, UNC-Chapel Hill. The purpose of this study is to explore the goals and practices of Czech and Slovak immigrant parents regarding their children's heritage language maintenance and loss in the U.S.

Participating in this study is voluntary and will involve one or possibly two individual interviews conducted in person with the researcher at a time and place that is convenient to you. In addition, a focus group interview with other participants may be scheduled for selected participants.

The initial individual interview will last up to one hour. The potential follow up interview and focus group interview would last less than two hours each, and involve only some participants. All interviews will be recorded. Both parents will be interviewed individually, if possible. If you choose to participate, you can choose not to answer certain questions or you can withdraw from the study at any time.

In appreciation for full participation in this study each family will receive a \$25 gift card to Klara's restaurant in Cary, NC. Participating fully would involve the initial interview with one or two parents in the family, and a follow-up interview with one or two parents. Focus group interview may be also requested of parents in families participating fully in the study. If only the initial interview with one or two parents is requested and completed, a family will receive a \$10 gift card to this restaurant.

The information you provide will be used anonymously to fully protect your privacy and identity. Findings from this study will be presented in a dissertation, and may also be published in a scholarly journal or book, or shared at an academic conference.

If you are interested in participating, or wish to receive more details about the study, please contact Marta McCabe at martam@live.unc.edu.

If you know someone else who might qualify for this study, please share this information with him/her.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Marta McCabe

Doctoral Candidate

School of Education, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

APPENDIX 4: Socio-Demographic Survey

1. When did you move to the United States?
2. Was this the first time you entered the U. S.? If not, when and why did you come before that?
.....
3. What was the reason for your immigration?
4. Have you moved within the U.S. since you immigrated?
5. Do you intend to stay in the U.S., to move back, or to move elsewhere?
.....
6. How often do you travel back to the Czech Republic/Slovakia?
.....
7. Please choose your age range.
a) Under 30 b) 30-39 c) 40-49 d) Over 50
8. Please state your level of education.
a) Less than high school b) High school c) College degree
d) Master's degree e) Beyond Master's degree
9. What is your current occupation?
10. How many children do you have?
11. What are the names (only first name) and ages of your children?
.....
.....
12. What languages do you speak?
13. What language do you prefer to speak: a) with your spouse b) with your children c) with friends?
a) b) c)

APPENDIX 5: Informed Consent

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Consent to Participate in a Research Study Adult Participants, Social Behavioral Form

IRB Study #	12-0671
Consent Form Version Date:	03/21/2012
Title of Study:	The experiences of Central European immigrants raising bilingual children in the U.S.
Principal Investigator:	Marta McCabe
UNC-Chapel Hill Department:	School of Education
Email Address:	martam@email.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor:	Dr. Xue Lan Rong
UNC-Chapel Hill Department:	School of Education
Email Address:	xrong@email.unc.edu
Study Contact telephone number:	(919) 724-6426
Study Contact email:	martam@email.unc.edu

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, at any time, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this research study is to explore the experiences of Central European immigrants raising bilingual children in the U.S.

How many people will take part in this study?

If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately twenty people in this research study.

How long will your part in this study last?

You will be involved in this study for up to 6 hours over a period of four months.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be invited to be in one initial interview which will last up to one hour. A follow up interview may be scheduled, lasting up to two hours. Finally, a focus group

interview involving some of the other participants in this study may be scheduled, lasting up to two hours. During the interviews you will be asked to share your experiences raising bilingual children in the U.S. Interviews will be conducted at times and places convenient for you. Both parents will be interviewed individually, if possible.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. This study will provide a better understanding of the language needs of children of immigrants in the U.S. This new knowledge may inform and help improve programs and policies aimed at language education of children of immigrants in the United States.

While you may not benefit directly from the study, you might enjoy sharing your experience. You may also learn how your own experience compares to the situation of other Czech or Slovak immigrants in the U.S. When the study is completed you will receive a summary of the findings.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks for you as a participant in this study. However, if any recollection of personal experience during the interview should cause any discomfort, you can decline to discuss those issues. In fact, you may decline to answer any question for any reason. Any problems should be reported to the researcher.

How will your privacy be protected?

To protect your identity and privacy, your name, town of residence, or any other unique or private information will not appear in any transcript, research report, publication, or presentation of this study. All direct quotations will be used anonymously and will not contain any identifying information.

In spite of these measures, the researcher cannot entirely prevent other people who know you from inferring that you were in the study, or possibly that you were the source of a particular example that was mentioned in a report, even though no names were used. That is, due to the small numbers of Czech and Slovak immigrants in the area other participants may be able to recognize you in the report by the general information you share during the interviews.

The individual interviews and the possible focus group discussion will be audio-recorded to allow for transcribing what participants have said for a more in-depth analysis. However, during the individual interviews, you may at any time ask that the digital audio recorder be turned off.

Check the line that best matches your choice:

☐ OK to record me during the individual interviews

☐ Not OK to record me during the individual interviews (just take notes instead)

The audio recordings as well as the transcripts of the interviews will be saved on the researcher's password-protected personal computer. No one else other than the researcher will have access to these data. The transcripts will not contain any identifying information, such as your name or address. Any hardcopies (paper copies) of interviews transcriptions and/or the consent forms will be kept in the researcher's home.

What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete?

You can withdraw from this study at any time, for any reason, without penalty. If you decide at any time that you do not wish to continue to participate in this study, you should let the researcher listed on the first page know.

Will you receive anything for being in this study?

In appreciation your families helping with this study, families who participate fully in the study will receive a \$25 gift card to Klara's restaurant in Cary, NC. Participating fully would involve the initial interview with one or two parents in the family, and a follow-up interview with one or two parents. Focus group interview may be also requested of parents in families participating fully in the study. If only the initial interview with one or two parents is requested and completed, a family will receive a \$10 gift card to this restaurant.

Will it cost you anything to be in this study?

There will be no costs for being in the study.

What if you have questions about this study?

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, complaints, or concerns, you should contact the researcher listed on the first page of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

Title of Study: The experiences of Central European immigrants raising bilingual children in the U.S.

Principal Investigator: Marta McCabe

Participant's Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Printed Name of Research Participant

Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

Date

Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

APPENDIX 6: Interview Protocol

1. Please tell me what languages are spoken at your household and how often?
 - a. What language do you, your spouse, and your children prefer to speak at home?
 - b. In what situations or contexts?
 - c. In all, would you say there is more Czech or English spoken in your family.

Prosím, řekněte mi, jaké jazyky používáte u vás doma, a jak často?
Který jazyk nejraději používáte vy, váš partner, a vaše děti?
V jakých situacích?
Celkove, řekl/a byste, že se u vás doma používá více češtiny, nebo angličtiny?
2. Would you describe how well you and your children speak the language(s)?
 - a. Do they like using Czech language?
 - b. Can your children read or write in Czech/Slovak?

Popsal/a byste, jak dobře mluvíte česky/slovensky vy sám/sama a vaše děti?
Používají Vaše děti češtinu/radi?
Dovedou vaše děti číst a psát v češtině/slovenštině?
3. How important is it for you that your children know Czech/Slovak in its spoken and/or written form?
 - a. What do you expect?

Jak důležité je pro vás, aby vaše děti uměly mluvit, číst, a psát česky/slovensky?
Jakou míru znalosti češtiny u vašich dětí očekáváte?
4. What do you do to help your child/ren learn Czech/Slovak in the U.S?
 - a. What practices work and what practices do not work so well?
 - b. Do you maintain any contacts with your country of origin in order to provide opportunities for your child/ren to learn Czech/Slovak?

Jakými způsoby se snažíte pomoci vašim dětem naučit se česky/slovensky v Americe?
Co má úspěch a co ne?
Udržujete nějaké kontakty v Čechách/na Slovensku, které pomáhají vašim dětem mluvit česky/slovensky?
5. Do/did you have any plan for teaching your children Czech abroad? What was it?
 - a. Would you recall whether your approach to and expectations about heritage language maintenance in your children have changed over time?
 - b. If so, in what ways?

Mate -Mel/a jste – nějaký plán ohledně používání češtiny v rodině v zahraničí? Jaký?
Řekl/a byste, že se váš přístup a očekávání ohledně udržení češtiny/slovenštiny pro vaše děti nějak proměňoval v průběhu času? Jak?
6. In your opinion, who should be involved in the effort of heritage language maintenance for children of immigrants (such as your children)?

Kdo by měl být, podle vás, zapojen do - a zodpovědný za - výuku rodného jazyka dětí přistěhovalců (jako například vašich dětí) v Americe?

7. In your opinion, who/what social factors have a major positive influence on your children's learning of Czech/Slovak?
.... Negative influence?
Jaké jsou podle vás nejdůležitější pozitivní vlivy (rodina, komunita, jiné společenské faktory) na znalost češtiny/ slovenštiny u vašich dětí?
...negativní?
8. Do/did any schooling experiences of your child/ren - or any school-related factors - have an effect on your child/ren's Czech/Slovak language proficiency and use?
Má podle vás škola – a se školou související okolnosti – nějaký dopad na znalost a míru používání češtiny/slovenštiny u vašich dětí?
9. Do you/did you experience any challenges/unexpected moments raising children in another country? What are your experiences with the children's schooling?
Zaznamenal/a jste nějaké překážky nebo nečekané momenty ve výchově vašich dětí v jiné zemi, než kde jste vyrostl/s? Jaké jsou vaše zkušenosti se školstvím v Americe?
10. Is there anything else relevant to the topic that we have not talked about?
Chtěl/a byste dodat cokoli dalšího k tomuto tématu, co je pro vás důležité, a o čem jsme dosud nemluvili?

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