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Planning parenthood: How important is it for people who plan to become parents to maintain their culture and language while raising their children in a bicultural and bilingual environment?

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Abstract

The current study aims to investigate the way Greek immigrant couples who live in the United Kingdom and are going to have children, plan to maintain and transmit their language and culture to their future children. Furthermore, the study mainly includes the perceptions of participants about bilingualism and biculturalism. The present study investigates the importance of language and cultural maintenance since many people migrate to a new country because of globalization. The study highlights the way participants picture themselves as parents and the practices they want to adopt in order to familiarize their children with both the native language and the societal language. The influence of culture on childrearing perspectives and plans is also discussed. Five different interviews via Skype were conducted and analyzed qualitatively with the aid of thematic analysis.

The study confirms that cultural and language maintenance is essential to the participants and that they want their future children to be familiar with their country of origin. Participants are conscious about their decision and there are also some negative aspects of their culture which they want to avoid. Traditions seem to play a major role in Greek culture; therefore maintaining most of them would enhance children's familiarization with Greece. Participants want to combine both their own culture and the host culture as well and they are planning practices to maintain the Greek language. On the whole, this study shows that bilingualism and biculturalism affect parental practices but they could also have a positive impact on children's development.

Keywords: biculturalism, bilingualism, parents, Greek-English bilinguals

Preface/Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

In this globalized world more and more people decide to migrate. Better living conditions, job opportunities and studies are some of the reasons many people leave their country of origin and start a new life somewhere else. The United Kingdom seems to be a desirable destination for many immigrants such as Greeks. According to statistics “62000 young Greeks have migrated to the United Kingdom over the past seven years” and 2012 was the year with the biggest migration wave to the United Kingdom from Greece (Zoulas 2017). Viewing the rising numbers of immigrants, 61 percent of Britons consider immigration as one of the most essential issues they have to deal with (Vasilopoulou 2016, p. 222).

This means that many Greek immigrants are possibly going to start a family life there as well and in some cases, the bicultural and bilingual environment might affect their childrearing plans. Even though most of the immigrants in general choose to leave their country in order to have a better life and future, this does not mean that abandoning their heritage culture and language is an option. A big challenge that children who are immigrants have to face is navigating between two cultures, so usually parents are the ones who are responsible for their children’s bicultural and bilingual balance (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 57).

Usually, people who plan to become parents are positive about their future parental strategies and they have specific things in mind that they want to put into practice for the welfare and the well-being of their children. It is important for parents to discuss the kind of parents they wish to become before having their first baby as they set a few goals they want to achieve in order to serve in the most beneficial way the best interests of their future children. Usually, people who are not parents yet worry about the future of their future children and they could be optimistic, fearless or even romantic about their childrearing plans. The new country in which future parents migrate could not only offer better life conditions but also a new parenting perspective. It is therefore very interesting to have a closer look on young couple’s goals regarding parenting and especially over their bilingual and bicultural role. As Piller claims (2002, p. 5) couplehood is a private dimension since two different and unique individuals consist a relationship. Therefore, she says that it is worth to be studied since the relationship of the couple has an impact to the individual and couple’s communication could lead the marriage to happiness or failure.

One of the reasons I chose to conduct this research with people who plan to become parents and not with actual parents is because I think that people who do not have children share a more optimistic opinion on how parental practices should be, especially immigrant couples who plan parenthood due to their fears and ambitions. Approaching future parents' views and thoughts over parenthood seems appealing since there are no children yet to play their role into shaping the language and the culture of the family, because sometimes children reject parents' use of language and negotiate or reshape family's language choice (Fogle & King 2013, p. 2).

Planning child-raising in terms of bilingualism and biculturalism could be challenging because in some cases the access to heritage and language is limited to immediate family members. One thing that should be clear is that according to Grosjean (1996, p. 20) the terms bilingual and multilingual refer to those people who speak two or more languages in everyday life. Multiple factors such as family's attitudes and language practices affect the preservation of one's native language, while children's language development could be affected by parents' views of bilingualism (Gkaintartzi et al. 2014, p. 291).

Hence, since parenting styles are usually formed by culture, parenting practices and belief systems tend to be passed from one generation to the next (Sung 2010, p. 200), while maintaining the heritage culture is usually essential for parents in order to create strong family ties and foster closer relations among the family members (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 58). Finally, the bond between the parent and the child is very important in Greek culture since it sets the family as the central value (Rosenthal et al. 1989, p. 59).

Many immigrant future parents seem to think that a bicultural environment might be beneficial for their children since developing two languages could have a positive educational impact on child (Takeuchi 2016, p. 236). As Romaine says (1995, pp. 107-118) many researches show that bilingual children have an advantage over monolingual children as they tend to be more sensitive and flexible over the different language messages since bilingualism might have a positive influence on the cognitive development of the child. In addition, since children's lives can be affected by their bilingual and bicultural heritage it is important to study future parents' views on their children's well-being.

Even though United Kingdom is a monolingual country since its official language is English, it is a country that accepts a huge number of immigrants from all

around the world. This leads to the co-existence of multiple languages and cultures. Therefore, bilingualism is present around the globe, in all classes of society and in all age groups, and it has been estimated that half population of the world is bilingual (Grosjean 1996, p. 20). The cultural identity of a person consists of many factors which define the personality and the existence of a human being. According to Hall (1959, pp. 52-53) culture is the total sum of human life since it affects all its aspects of life and it influences daily life without a person being able to sense and realize its effect.

Every person is influenced by its country's culture, language and history in some way. Greek culture and history are famous around the world and many Greek people feel proud of their culture; therefore it is interesting to investigate Greek immigrant's views of bilingualism and biculturalism and how they picture the next generation's perspective about Greek ancestry.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS

Aim of the research

The present thesis investigates the importance of language and cultural maintenance for immigrant couples who plan to become parents. Because of globalization many people choose or are forced to migrate to a new country; therefore they have to adapt to a new culture, yet they also want to maintain their own culture as well. A bilingual person does not have to be bicultural, but in the case of children from bilingual families, bilingualism usually means biculturalism as well (Grosjean 2010, pp. 108-112).

Being a parent is a huge responsibility and immigrant people who plan to become parents recognize the bilingual and bicultural challenges they usually have to face and since parents and family are important factors in children's lives they are usually entitled to decide what is best for their children. Hence, as James & James argue (2012, p. 54), even though children are not passive, in some way they are dependent on their parents since they are understood as members of the family, therefore the family is usually the best place for them.

This thesis explores immigrant's views, thoughts and plans about bicultural and bilingual childrearing in the United Kingdom. Five Greek couples who are planning to have a baby soon were chosen for this research and interviews were conducted with just the one of the two members of each couple. These couples had knowledge of the English language upon their arrival to the United Kingdom and the reasons for their immigration include seeking a better life, better job opportunities, studies or in some cases following the partner.

The present thesis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of bilingualism and biculturalism and shed light on planning parenthood over the terms of cultural and language maintenance. By analyzing interview data, the study examines thoughts, perspectives, plans and practices of Greek immigrants in United Kingdom.

Research questions

More specifically, this thesis will explore the following questions:

- What are the parents' thoughts about parental practices they want to adopt and in which ways are they related to the promotion of their own heritage and culture to their children?
- In which ways are the chosen language management and language choices related to the familiarization with both native language and societal language?
- How much have parents' childrearing perspectives and plans changed through their familiarization with the host culture, if at all?

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This section offers a discussion about existing research in the field of parenting, culture, language and bilingualism. By reviewing previous research and examining related concepts, the section situates the study within the field of bicultural and bilingual research environment.

Parental responsibility and decision-making

The purpose of the present thesis is to examine the thoughts, the plans and the decisions of future parents. Becoming a parent is usually a conscious decision and usually a parent's goal is to take care of the welfare of its child; therefore most parents tend to plan many aspects of parenthood. Family is usually considered as an important and necessary factor in children's lives, since parents are usually the ones who decide what is best for their children. It is clear that when a couple decides to have a child this usually demands a huge responsibility of theirs as there are so many aspects they should keep in mind. There are legal, logical, social and psychological dimensions on being a parent, all of which differ regarding the country and apart from this, the bond between the parent and the child consist not only of biological dimensions but of social as well (James & James 2012, p. 84).

A parent usually strives to do what is the best for its child, and nurtures it by taking the best decisions for it. As Narveson says (2007, p. 44) in a study of parents' views of parenthood, purposes and responsibilities were described as a matter of turning the child to a decent, respectful and loved person who treats the others well. It is common that the decision for starting a family leads to a plan for offering the best conditions to the new member of the family and also to a plan for being the best version of a parent. Parents are the ones who shape children's experiences and in many ways they set boundaries for family life but also for their children's future adult life (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 57) since family is one of the most important concepts in human life. Since parents are even responsible for the existence of their children this means they share the full responsibility for their life now (Narveson 2007, p. 19).

But parenting lies between the private social and emotional space which provides socialization and has a leading role in child protection even though it might

vary between cultures (James & James 2012, pp. 84-85). Demanding tasks can be accomplished by children when parents provide guidance and help them participate in appropriate tasks which they are able to complete (Eason & Ramani 2017, p. 2). Of course as James & James point out (2012, p. 53-54) “family is a quality rather than a thing” and they also highlight the importance of considering the terms of “doing” a family instead of “being in” a family. Therefore, family consists of parental decisions and practices which transform the family in what it really is. Parents are the “tools” with the help of which harmony is transmitted among the family and serves the best interests of the child. Children are not just passive but in some way they are dependent on their parents since they are understood as members of the family, and usually it is the family the very best place for them (James & James 2012, p. 54).

Cultural influence on parenting and parents’ decisions over culture and language

When people migrate, they bring their culture, language and belief system with them. Of course their culture is going to influence in some way their family relationships, childrearing practices and socialization goals for their child’s development (Cheah et al. 2013, p. 30). Since international migration is something really common this means that many families are transnational which leads to implications for parents who want to familiarize their children with their heritage culture (Ferguson et al. 2016, p. 166). Usually immigrants wish to maintain their cultural habits and values. For example, many East Asian people who migrate to the United States experience difficulties into adapting to the new host culture and they tend to maintain many aspects of their heritage since culture has an impact on individuals (Sung 2010, p. 200). Attitudes towards children differ between different societies and cultures and eventually there are different expectations of children’s potentials (James & James 2012, p. 35).

On the other hand, even though there are obvious cultural influences over parenting, there are also some common parental practices, thoughts and behaviors around the globe (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 59). Usually parents worry about how they are going to be “good parents” and how they can avoid “bad parenting” even though what is considered a “good” or a “bad” parent could differ from culture to culture. As King & Fogle point out (2006, p. 697) cultural notions could affect

parental decisions about bilingualism since in some communities it is considered as good parenting while in others as bad parenting. Even though a bilingual person does not have to be bicultural, in the case of children from bilingual families, bilingualism usually also means biculturalism (Grosjean, 2010, pp. 108-112). Therefore, some new immigrant parents develop bicultural parenting practices in order to cope with the differences they have to deal with and help their children's adjustment to the host culture (Uttal & Han 2011, p. 441). For example, Asian Indian immigrant mothers in the United States were preserving their cultural, parental practices but they were also open to changes who challenged the traditional norms they already knew (Moscardino et al. 2011, p. 12).

Culture plays an important role in forming parenting styles since parenting practices and belief systems pass from one generation to the next (Sung 2010, p. 200). When a couple who plans to have children shares the same language and culture, this means that the couple shares the same ethnicity as well. This means that there are similarities in their attitudes, behaviors and traditions which are essential as they contribute to the construction of personal and social identity (James & James 2012, p. 49). The different ethnicity might have an impact and influence the daily life of a child in many ways (James & James 2012 pp. 49-50) but "becoming bilingual is an integration strategy" since both cultures could co-exist (Uttal & Han 2011, p. 442). After all, every human is being influenced by the culture in which he or she is being surrounded by. So it is not a surprise that sometimes parents are not truly responsible for their actions since cultural beliefs and values have an impact on their practices (Sung 2010, p. 209).

The significance of culture's and language's maintenance for immigrant parents

It seems that it is important for many parents and future parents to maintain their mother tongue and their own culture and transmit them to their children. Parental decision on bilingualism is both a timeless and a contemporary subject which needs further research since there is more to be known on parents' perspectives, intentions and preferences on this (Lee et al. 2015, pp. 504-505). Preserving your own culture could be considered as equally important with enhancing children's belonging to the

host culture even though both of them are considered as independent dimensions. Some parents may face problems with combining their own culture with the host culture, but the combination of the two different cultures is usually beneficial for their children. A sense of belonging to the host culture enhances the “feelings of acceptance and positive intergroup relations” while a bicultural identity leads to “better psychological adjustment and more positive attitudes towards members of the host society” (Spiegler et al. 2016, pp. 1160-1161).

As it is pointed out by Leyendecker et al. (2018, p. 58) parents usually aim to maintain the native language in order to create strong family ties and foster closer relations among the family members. For some parents it is important to help their children feel proud of their heritage; therefore in places like childcare centers they would not feel embarrassed of their identity (Uttal & Han 2011, p. 437). The above could reflect at the arguments of cultural relativism that “societies have the right to their own view-points and perspectives” and cultural practices are dependent to cultural contexts (James & James 2012, p. 35) since the cultural differences might be faced successfully by families without causing any further issues (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 61). But promoting their children’s development according to their values, norms and expectations could be considered as a universal goal for parents even though parents from collectivist cultures tend to adopt a parenting style which allows them to enhance relational closeness to their own culture (Moscardino et al. 2011, p. 12). Hence, as Ogiermann says (2013, p. 481) the different language choices could affect one person’s identity.

In addition, being in touch with the heritage culture means in many cases that the child will be bilingual. Developing two languages could have a positive educational impact on child (Takeuchi 2016, p. 236) while many immigrant parents have positive views about this as they think that the children do not face any difficulties, they are happy and in fact they have the capacity to learn multiple languages (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 11). However, the use of the societal language is essential for the interaction within the society especially for school and career opportunities (Tuominen 1999, p. 60).

Moreover, for some immigrant parents good language skills in the heritage language would help their children to learn a second language more easily (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 13). Biculturalism provides freedom of choice to children and it offers them lots of opportunities which they can take advantage of, such as learning two

languages (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 61). Sometimes immigrant parents feel worried that the host culture will absorb their children and they will end up losing connection with their culture and language but it is important to be reminded that the differences between the two cultures offer benefits, therefore parents expect their children to understand the native language and be familiar with heritage cultural norms and ancestry (Uttal & Han 2011, p. 441).

One of the reasons that learning how to speak the heritage language is considered important is the communication with the grandparents and other family members in the country of origin (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 62). For example, Taiwanese parents who tend to take their children for a visit to their country point out how important it is for their children in order to be able to communicate properly (Uttal & Han 2011, p. 442). Since it is common for immigrant parents to preserve a connection with their family back in their home country it is also common to want their children not only to have two languages but also having two cultural backgrounds since this could affect their personal and cultural identity in a positive way (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 12). Furthermore, having a bicultural competency would help children to become “socially competent in different social worlds” (Uttal & Han 2011, p. 442). After all, there is no evidence that children’s cognitive skills are harmed because of bilingualism; on the contrary it seems that bilingual children may have an advantage over monolingual ones (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 62).

Therefore, even though it seems that the maintenance of culture and language is essential for immigrant parents, mastering the host language is equally important as well. As it is said by Leyendecker et al. (2018, p. 62) there is a connection with the family when the native language is preserved but there is a connection with the world outside the family when the host language is approached. Even though some immigrant parents choose not to speak their mother tongue with their children, they desire to help them having a connection with their own culture and they hope their children would want to learn their native language as a second one in the future (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 13).

Parents’ strategies and language practices

Parents play an important role in socializing children into both the heritage culture and the host culture (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 60). The interaction between the

parent and the child offers the child the opportunity to be familiar with the spoken language and influences its vocabulary development as this interaction has an impact on its language growth (Bingham et al. 2013, p. 395). Sometimes immigrant children are introduced to the societal language when they first enter school (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 2) and first generation immigrants are the one who are more likely to speak their mother tongue (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 63).

Of course both parents need to contribute on child's language development because so far it is common for fathers not to talk to their children as much as the mothers do (Bingham et al. 2013, pp. 395-396). But multiple factors may contribute to the development of bilingualism and bilingual children tend to differ from children who learn only one language as they face different cultural challenges (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 3). Going to the church is one way to familiarize the child with the heritage culture (Uttal & Han 2011, p. 442) while technology can affect and enrich child's speaking, writing, listening and reading skills on heritage language, such as the use of Skype (Szecsi & Szilagyi 2012, p. 271). Access to Internet helps immigrant children to be in touch with their heritage culture and language and it is also a very useful tool for later generations who lack of communication with the country of origin (Ferguson et al. 2016, p. 169). Watching movies and folk tales help children to gain knowledge on heritage history while chatting on Skype with relatives from the country of origin strengthen the cultural identity (Szecsi & Szilagyi 2012, p. 274).

Shared book reading is another type of social interaction between the parent and the child which enforces the development of native language (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 4) even though discourse strategies should be put together with the use of language in order children to have mixed language choices (Mishina-Mori 2011, p. 3131). Of course it is important for immigrant parents to encourage their children to use the native language (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 11) and not applying strict rules to develop bilingual skills. In order to learn how to speak the heritage language children need to have opportunities to use it (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 14) like when visiting the county of origin and relatives or enrolling home language classes and of course as it mentioned above in interactions with their parents (Spolsky 2004, p. 8).

However, the development of heritage language is not always easy even in cases where the parents' strongly want to maintain the native language in the family (King & Fogle 2006, p. 696); therefore sometimes parents adopt explicit language management strategies such as controlling the home environment to manage their

goal (Spolsky 2009, p. 24). But in general the main language interaction among the family is positive and includes as Blum-Kulka says (2002, p. 85) family mealtimes, since gathering around the dinner table enhances the language socialization through a regular conversation where the native language is used.

METHOD

This study is based on semi-structured interviews with five Greek future parents. In this section I describe the data collection procedures and the method of analysis.

Data collection

The data of this research consist of semi-structured interviews with people who plan to become parents. Five middle class couples participated in the research with only one individual from every couple being interviewed. The participants have moved to the United Kingdom over the past five years and they already knew how to speak English. They have studied at university and they decided to migrate for better life conditions. The interviews lasted about twenty to thirty minutes each and three interviewees were women and two were men. I chose to conduct individual interviews and not interview the couples because in most cases it was not easy to find a convenient time for both and since I lack previous experience of interviewing, I thought it would be easier for me to handle just one participant per interview.

The initial plan was to interview five Greek couples living in the United Kingdom. In order to gain access to couples who met the criteria of my research I contacted friends who live in the United Kingdom asking them if they know suitable participants. In total 10 couples were recommended and four of them were already expecting their first child. The rest of them are thinking of having a baby during this year or are trying to conceive.

At first I chose to contact the four couples who are expecting because I thought that they might already have plans about their baby's bilingual development. I contacted them via e-mail and introducing the research project. I also explained the ethical considerations and answered their questions about the research. I assured them that I would treat the collect data according to the ethical principles in social research (see Bryman 2016, pp. 125-133). All of them expressed their willingness to participate so I contacted one more couple in order to have five participants in total. I followed the same procedure as I mentioned above but unfortunately it was difficult to find a date for an interview so I contacted another couple. I was luckier in this case as the wife was available.

After receiving permission from the ethical vetting board at Child Studies department, I started planning the interviews. I prepared a question guide (Appendix 2) according to Bryman's instructions (2016, pp. 468-475) which helped me organize the questions I wanted to ask to the participants and I arranged a time when both I and the participants were available. The last step of the preparation for the interviews was to email the participants the consent letters (Appendix 3) in order to be signed. Unfortunately it was not possible to conduct the interviews during the first week because the participants were on holidays because of Orthodox Easter; therefore all the interviews were conducted during the second week. In total Orthodox Easter period lasts two weeks, so even during the second week was not the most convenient time for both the participants and myself, but all participants were kind enough to find some time to devote to my research.

Fortunately, there was no cancellation at the last minute and the interviews were conducted just as the participants and I had scheduled. Only one of the interviews was re-scheduled because of one participant's family obligations but I was informed on time and the interview was just transferred to the very next day. Before starting to interview the participants I briefed about my research again, asking for their permission to record the interview once again and I also reminded them that their participation is voluntary and that they are free to stop their participation any time.

I conducted the interviews mainly in Greek but there were a few parts of the interviews where we talked in English or used a few English words. The participants were very friendly and also very talkative and open which contributed to the informal atmosphere of the interviews. I tried not to be judgmental (Bryman 2016, p. 472) and not to be influenced by what interviewees were saying as my purpose was to get their perspective and point of view (Bryman 2016, p. 466). One of my goals was to be a good listener and make the participants feel comfortable without pushing them to give me more information.

As I conducted semi-structured interviews using Skype I was prepared to face potential technological issues which would influence the quality of recording (Bryman 2016, p. 492). Hence, I had to use my mobile phone in order to record the interviews. I was lucky as I did not face specific difficulties as both the participants and I checked our Internet connection before the interview took place. Of course there were a few moments when the quality of the sound was not very good but fortunately these moments lasted only for a few seconds and did not delay or influence the

interviews negatively. Depending on the situation, I took a few notes during the interviews but I tried to be attentive as it would be considered rude of me not to look in the camera most of the time.

Ethical considerations

The present study follows the Swedish Research Council's ethical guidelines for data collection and processing. It also follows the Research Council's UK ethical guidance on social research and Government's Social Research Unit main areas of law such as confidentiality and consent. Since the participants of this study are residents in the United Kingdom, I had to follow the relevant ethical guidelines in order to conduct properly my social research. I thought it was really important to be aware of possible ethical dilemmas since Farrell points out (2005, p. 29) that ethics help the researchers to be familiar with hidden problems and questions in research, and deal them, even though it is not always an easy task.

After my research proposal was accepted by the ethical vetting board of Linköping University I decided to follow Bryman instructions (2016, p. 131) and the first thing I planned to do, was to receive the consent I needed from the participants. I had already asked friends who live in the United Kingdom to introduce me to Greek couples who live there and are planning to become parents or are already expecting their first child. I contacted the participants and introduced myself, the department and the research project as well. I also presented myself as master student at the department of Child Studies, Linköping University.

The participants received consent letters in English and they had enough time to read and think about the research project, discuss the information with me and ask possible questions (See Appendix 3). Consent for recording of the interview was asked while their anonymity was ensured. They were informed about the confidentiality of the collected material and that they were going to be used for research purposes only. I explained that their participation is voluntary and I tried to be sure that they have true knowledge of research interest (Silverman 2011, p. 98) while I also pointed out that they had the right to stop their participation any time during the study. Overall, I tried to be guided by the four main areas of ethical

principles (harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, deception) and do the best for the quality of my research (Bryman 2016, p. 125).

Data analysis

In order to analyze the collected material, thematic analysis was used. I used the six phases of thematic analysis (Appendix 1) as described by Braun & Clarke (2016, p. 87) because “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.78-79).

At first I familiarized myself with the collected material since I carefully listened to the recordings and I transcribed the data on my computer. My next move was to sort the data from each participant into a separate file. During this procedure I tried to recognize any possible hidden meanings on participants’ sayings while I made initial notes and I also highlighted elements of texts of particular interest (Phase 1). That was the most time-consuming part of the whole thesis.

Moreover I had to read the whole data corpus many times in order to start producing codes (Phase 2). I systematically coded all the collected data (data corpus) by using highlighters once again as I tried to identify as many codes as possible. As Braun & Clarke mention (2006, p. 88) highlighting the meaningful data extracts by using different colors help putting the initial codes into groups accordingly in order to produce a good quality of analysis.

I then started noting potential themes (Phase 3) which helped me later create a thematic map for further analysis of the data. I used the long list I made during the previous phase in order to create several versions of possible themes. Apart from sorting the different codes into potential themes I also had to collate the gathered codes within the identified themes (Braun & Clarke 2008, p. 89). In this step I also used visuals such as mind maps to sort the codes even though I had in mind that possibly some codes might be used as themes themselves.

After all these, I created an initial thematic map in order to refine the created themes (Phase 4). The creation and use of the thematic map helped me to visualize once again the relation among the themes. I had in mind my research question which guided me in order to review the themes. I re-read all the data extracts which were related into each theme to ensure that my collected data fit into the themes. Of course

in this phase the themes should be clearly identified while there should be recognizable distinctions among them (Braun & Clarke 2008, pp. 90-91).

The next step was to define, name the themes and capture the essence of what each theme is about (Phase 5). This phase allowed me to recognize the meaning of the themes and the way they related to my research questions. My main focus remained on the themes which related the most to my research question and aim regarding the importance of biculturalism and bilingualism for future parents. I tried to identify if any sub-themes were still included into the main themes and then I named them. I tried to give concise names which would be clearly understandable. Thereby, four different themes were identified in total. These themes were named as “significance, values and negative aspects”, “planning practices and strategies”, “language” and “parenthood”. The themes are elaborated further in the next section.

The final stage involves the final analysis of the data and the production of the report (Phase 6).

ANALYSIS

This section offers the themes that were identified during the data analysis. The themes represent the sub-headings of this section and are analysed into several topics such as “significance, values and negative aspects”, “planning practices and strategies”, “language” and “parenthood”.

Significance, values and negative aspects

During the interviews the participants of the research expressed their views on the importance of cultural and language maintenance and their wish about their future child’s familiarization with their country of origin. Even though all of them pointed out some negative aspects of their culture which they want to avoid they mostly shared positive thoughts about bilingualism and biculturalism. More specifically, one of the participants said that:

“It is very important for your children to know where they are coming from, especially when you are living abroad. They should know about their culture, and where they belong to. It is important to have the feeling that they make their country proud wherever they are. Also, this will enhance the quality of parents-children relationship. Parents can share their experiences related to their culture.”

The above argument underlines the sentimental bond these immigrant future parents share with their home country and how important it is for their children to share the same bond. After all, as Leyendecker et al. claim (2018, p. 58) maintaining the native language is a way to create strong family ties and closer relations among the family members. The national identity seems to be one factor which shapes someone’s personality in a degree therefore it is seen as necessary for the children to recall where they are coming from and build on the positive things of their home country culture alongside with the positive things of our host country.

Almost all participants claimed that their children should be familiar with their ancestors’ culture, customs, tradition, roots, language and history. They pointed it out as a matter of their identity and personal ethics and more specifically two of the participants also gave emphasis on their nationality as they are “proud to be Greek”.

This refers to the “bad reputation” Greece has the last few years because of the economical crisis. As they stated they know many Greek people who live abroad who try to expel their Greek identity in some way but they do not want this to be passed to their children as they want to preserve the positive side of their country. After all as Uttal & Han say (2011, p. 437) parents want their children to feel proud of their heritage and not feel embarrassed of their identity.

In addition, all participants mentioned the benefits of raising their children bilingually and biculturally. One respondent said that:

“It is beneficial for the children to be familiar with different cultures. This will expand their knowledge and understanding of the world.”

It seems that all participants have been thinking about their children’s bicultural and bilingual development and are keen on the positive effects. As it is stated by Mosty et al. (2013, p. 11) immigrant parents usually have positive views on developing two languages as they think that the children do not face any difficulties because of this since they have the capacity to learn multiple languages. Most participants, especially the ones who are already expecting their first child were informed about bilingualism and biculturalism. They said that they have been reading journals about this specific topic and one of them has also visited a specialist and asked for advice. They conclude that one of the reasons they think that maintaining their own culture and language is important; it is because everyone keeps telling them that it would be the best for their child. One participant said that:

“If it was not for the beneficial development of my child I might have had totally different plans.”

Therefore, since the familiarization with the heritage culture would evolve children’s cultural development the participants are willing to contribute to this.

As an advantage, it has also been stated by two of the participants that Greek language and culture should be kept alive through generations otherwise it will be lost in the long run. In general, arts and traditions related to Greek culture would help the children to be familiar with their Greek origin since they are considered as important aspects of their country. Also, all five participants made clear how important it is for their children to be able to communicate in Greek with their relatives back in Greece. Being able to communicate by using the heritage language with the grandparents and other family members in the country of origin is a strong and common motivation (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 62). They shared stories of immigrant relatives who have

not raised their children as bilingual and as a result they do not speak Greek. As they said this is embarrassing and it prevents the creation of strong family ties especially during holidays in Greece.

On the other hand, participants did not only hold positive views over their country of origin but they also pointed out aspects of their own culture that they do not wish their future children to adopt. As it was said:

“I would like my children to get involved in the aspects of arts and history but not in the behavior and stereotypes of the Modern Greek culture. There are many social and religious stereotypes among Greek people that I do not want my children to have.”

Even though participants seem to love and appreciate their country of origin, they do not share the same feelings for some sides of their heritage culture. Racism, aversion to diversity and some old-fashioned stereotypes are not welcomed by young immigrant couples who want to improve their life's conditions.

One of the participants mentioned that every time she visits Greece she realizes how gossip is a big aspect in the daily life of her family. She said that she feels happy and relieved when she is back to the United Kingdom from her holidays in Greece because of the stressful situation of gossip. She claims that by avoiding common practices such as prejudice and overprotection of children she will become a better mother.

Other aspects that were mentioned were disrespect in public spaces, rudeness and discrimination over refugees. Some interviewees mentioned that living abroad and planning parenthood in a different country than the one of the home country makes you both appreciate and judge your country of origin. It seems to be a chance to be critical over the negative aspects and try to improve the habits and the ethics someone wants to transmit to its children.

Overall, participants seem to be familiar with the positive effects a bicultural and bilingual environment could offer and they are conscious about the reasons they want to familiarize their children with their culture and language. They are also conscious about the aspects they do not like and they think that their migration is a chance to raise their children in a better way.

Planning practices and strategies

Since participants stated that the maintenance of native language and culture is important, they are willing to familiarize their children with some aspects of their country of origin. In order to do this they are planning to adopt some practices and strategies which will help them to enhance their children's knowledge on this. All of them have a general idea of how they are going to behave towards their children in order to promote their culture and most of them are making plans. They present the aspects they wish to share with their children and the ways they plan to use in order to achieve their goal.

Some of the aspects participants want and plan to share with their children are the knowledge of Greek history. Almost everyone pointed out how great Greek history is and that it would be an advantage for their children to be familiar with this aspect. As one of them said:

“Greek mythology, history and literature are quite important to build a good knowledge of Greek civilization. Greece is a small country but it has offered so much to humanity and we should feel proud to be part of it.”

All participants said that they will talk to their children about Greek history and mythology but they also agreed that this will not be enough to make their children curious about their heritage. One of the participants plans to bring to her house in the United Kingdom some of her books about mythology and history. They are cartoons about the Greek gods and famous historical figures such as Pericles and Alexander the Great. The participant told me that she grew up reading those books and it would be a great joy for her to see her upcoming daughter reading them as well. Moreover, reading books in the native language is a great bed-time habit which helps the cognitive development of the child while it is a sensitive moment between the parent and the child. Hence, shared book reading is another type of social interaction between the parent and the child which enforces the development of heritage language (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 4). Also, one participant said that being familiar with national holidays such as 25th March and 28th October when Greece's independence is celebrated would help the children to have a better relationship with Greek history.

Other participants mentioned animated films that could be used as tools for entertaining knowledge about history and mythology. In all the examples it was

obvious that participants were thinking of productive ways to spend time with their children and helping them learning. Therefore, through familiarization with heritage the bond between the parent and the child becomes stronger.

Traditions are also very important and participants seem to want their future children to be keen on them. As one interviewee said:

“I would also like my child to learn not only the traditions but also to learn the mentality.”

According to participants the biggest Greek tradition is Orthodox Easter when family members gather together. Most participants said they want to continue celebrating Easter in the traditional Greek way since it brings the family together and it is a memorable period for a child. One of them said that some of her happiest memories as a child were the ones which took place during Easter. Being in a foreign country does not offer the opportunity to keep all the traditions and the participants, who are around their thirties, are not that traditional like their parents or grandparents. Most of them, since they moved to the United Kingdom do not celebrate Easter in the way they used to back in Greece, but they think it is important to maintain some aspects of Easter for their children. For example, going to church on Easter Saturday night when the Resurrection of Christ is celebrated and then going home where a traditional dish named “maghiritsa” (a tripe and herbs soup) has been cooked. Also gathering on Easter Sunday morning when lamb is prepared usually in the garden where the whole family is preparing the food.

On the other hand this festive atmosphere is not desirable for one participant. He said that most of the children in Greece are being told that “they have to” celebrate Easter and keep the traditions and this is an attitude that he does not wish his child to share. The participant thinks that Orthodox Easter is a nice opportunity to take some time off and spend family moments but without forcing his child not to eat meat during the Holy Week or eating specific food because of the tradition.

Even though Easter seems to be a huge part of Greek tradition, not all participants seem to be keen on going to church on a regular basis. Only one participant said that she believes in God and wants to share those beliefs with her child because it is very important. The rest of them seem to think church is a part of Greek tradition but they do not plan to go there very often. They think it is a chance to be involved with the Greek community or being a student of the Greek school as it will be analysed below. In general, it seems that they want their children to be open-

mindful and not be guided over mandatory faith which shows that participants are very conscious over their parental decisions even though as Uttal & Han claim (2011, p. 442), going to church is one way to familiarize the child with the heritage culture.

Planning to cook Greek food is another aspect which seems to be important. All participants want to cook Greek recipes for their children even though one participant said that she does not want to focus only to Greek cuisine but she also wants her child to taste food from all over the world such as Indian or Japanese which she really enjoys. Some participants pointed out that cooking Greek food, is also a healthy choice since it is based on Mediterranean diet. The eating habits will help children to be familiar with a huge aspect of the country of origin and will also teach them Greek words for many dishes and their ingredients. Hence, two participants wish their children to share their love for cooking and picture themselves with their children cooking Greek recipes.

Listening to Greek music and being familiar with Greek art in general are some other ways parents want to use in order to help their children maintain the heritage culture. One interviewee who is expecting her first child is already listening to music of great Greek musicians such as Manos Hatzidakis and Mikis Theodorakis since she claims it is good for the fetus. Apart from this, most of the participants said they want their children to be familiar with Greek music but they do not want to push them on this even though they want to use Greek music in musical games such as musical chairs. In this way it will be used for fun and not in a teaching way which could be boring for children. However, some artists are part of Greek history and they want them to be aware of this. In addition, all of them agreed that they do not want their children to listen to Modern Greek music because they said it lacks in quality.

Greek traditional dances might be a way to maintain the Greek culture since one participant said that it would be nice for his child to be familiar with this. Since the participant and his partner plan to visit Greece quite often, especially during summer, he thinks that dancing is a big aspect of Greek mentality.

All participants expressed their will to travel often to Greece in order to meet their relatives. They mentioned this as very important and as a beneficial way to be in touch with Greek culture. During those trips they would have the chance to speak the language, visit museums and famous historical places; therefore their children would be able to see all the things they were been talked about and meet in person the grandparents and the relatives with whom they were talking through Skype all this

time. It is true that access to Internet helps immigrant children to be in touch with their culture and language (Ferguson et al. 2016, p. 169) but it is not enough in order to be familiar with the culture of the country of origin; therefore long vacations to Greece would be a great opportunity for children to approach Greek mentality.

Among their views on cultural maintenance, one participant mentioned that since familiarization with Greek culture is important it is also important for his child to have a few Greek friends. He thinks it is important to have someone to share those special aspects of your life which differ from the host culture and he will try to help his child to meet other Greek children. The rest of the participants said that this is something they have not thought about and they do not really care as they do not want to push their children to be friends with someone based on ethnicity. They want their children to be free to choose their friends.

As on interviewee said:

“I would like my child to be more extrovert and more confident than I am. British children are a good example of this. If my child wants to adopt some of my Greek habits I would be pleased, but of course I do not want to push it for something like this.”

This is because some participants believe that some of their habits are because of their Greek nationality. This of course makes sense since participants were mature enough when they decided to migrate and many aspects of their characters and personalities have been shaped through Greek mentality. Hence, culture plays an important role in forming parenting styles since parenting practices and belief systems pass from one generation to the next (Sung 2010, p. 200). A few of them would like to see their child adopting some of those habits but on the other hand they claim that the British example might be more beneficial for some aspects of their development.

On the whole, participants want to maintain multiple aspects such as history and traditions but always through sentimental bonds, love and respect. They have arguments for every single opinion they share, and their arguments always serve their children’s welfare and development. Even though they love their country, they are also critical against it as there some methods and ways they do not wish to follow.

Language

Language maintenance seems to be a major topic for participants since they mentioned how responsible they feel over their native language and its preservation. According to Spolsky (2004, p. 112) “language maintenance” refers to the effort of supporting and promoting the use of a language while it is still vital. Their thoughts and concerns are also about their children’s skills on societal language and its relation with their mother tongue. Participants alongside with their partners are planning to raise their children in bilingual way; therefore there will be a balance between the heritage and societal language.

Two participants are planning to speak to their children only in Greek while the rest of them said they will use both Greek and English. It is a conscious decision of theirs, in which has been put into a lot of thought; therefore their partners will follow the same plan as well. Just in one participant’s case, the partner will follow a different route. In this case the participant is planning to use both Greek and English while the partner will speak to the child only in Greek.

Three participants will use both Greek and English and the other two will speak just in Greek. All of them believe they are going to be consistent in this choice of theirs since they have been thinking about this topic a lot and they concluded that their choice will serve the best for their child. One participant that will speak to its child in Greek said:

“Research indicates that it is better for the parent to use his/her mother language. In any case, the children will learn English from school and environment.”

The above statement shows the interest and the concern for the future child since the participant has been reading a lot about the topic without being stressed out. Those words do not underestimate the societal language but show how both the languages are been considered as equally important. Hence, parent’s language perspectives, choices and strategies play a fundamental role in the development of children’s language (King et al. 2008, p. 912).

The second participant said that the native language is the only choice and option since they are all Greeks in the house. He is going to speak with his upcoming child only in Greek as well. It was also mentioned that English is important but it will

be taught in school. The participant said that using his mother tongue comes naturally so speaking English to his child would be like pretending to be someone else in his own house. The interviewee pictures its family gathered around dinner table speaking and in Greek which proves the sentimental attitude of participant's plans. After all, as Blum-Kulka says (2002, p. 85) family mealtimes enhance the language socialization through a regular conversation is the native language.

As it mentioned above, the other three participants stated that they will use both Greek and English. One participant said that after spending the last five years living in the United Kingdom she feels like becoming bilingual herself. She said that because of her job and social life, she spends most of her daily time speaking in English and she has even caught up herself thinking in English instead of thinking in her native language.

Another participant pointed out how important and beneficial is for the child to learn both languages; therefore the interviewee wants to contribute to this by using both Greek and English in the house. The participant is feeling optimistic about the results of this choice; therefore unless the child develops difficulties to school or face any challenge on combining heritage and societal language, the participant has no intention to change her plans.

The last interviewee considers speaking in both languages as a positive combination for both the child and the parent. Once again the importance of mother tongue's maintenance was mentioned but the participant also said that speaking English with her child will also be beneficial for the parents since English is a second language for them and in this way they will be more fluent.

Even though it seems that all the five participants have quite different attitudes towards their language choices and their reasons behind those choices, in the end their rationale behind their plans do not differ that much. They all think that maintaining their native language is very important for the child and they are all confident about their choice as they believe it will serve the best development of their child. However, not all of them share the same ambitions over their children's capacity on Greek language. Three of the five participants wish their children would reach a mother tongue level on their native language while the other two participants are satisfied with a very good language level.

Three participants said that they would like their children to attend a Greek school in order to learn the language properly since learning within the family will not

be enough. The other two participants were keen on the idea but they were not sure yet or they have not thought about this yet. There is no regular Greek school in the region where the participants live but the local Greek Orthodox Church provides Greek lessons every weekend. A few of the participants pointed out that even though it would be great for their children to attend those classes they have no intention to push them if they do not want to go. But the existence of such a school could be a motivation for participants' goals over the language maintenance. It could be a reminder of Greek language and heritage and make their efforts not look effortless. As Spolsky says (2004, p. 359) school has a determinant role and parents' decision to maintain the minority language could be influenced by the presence of a heritage language educational system.

Despite the use of Greek and not English in the house and the wish for a mother tongue level in Greek, one participant said that undeniably English has priority. This may sound strange after participant's plans about its child's language development but since its child will be living in an English-spoken country, the societal language would have the dominant role in its life. The participant recognizes that raising his child as bilingual would be extremely beneficial for child's cognitive development but using its own words:

“It would be ridiculous to speak to my child another language than Greek. But I have to be realistic. Probably, Greek will not be useful in its life. I mean it would be useful when the child would visit Greece but in any other case... I do not know... I have read that being bilingual is really good for your brain so I want to promote this. But we are living in the United Kingdom, so even though we will speak in Greek, he has to know English too. The child will not spend its life indoors, but he (the upcoming baby is a boy) will be part of the British society.”

The above statement represents some of the concerns and the fears these future parents have since two more participants share similar views. Also, these concerns show how unsure a parent could be for the future of its child despite all the plans and the ambitions. Hence, it could be said that some of the thoughts about language maintenance are romanticized since the reality could end up differently.

The rest two participants consider both Greek and English as equally important since they will both enhance child's knowledge and personality. Processing all the above it could be concluded that participants are not worried about their children's

capacity in English. All of them seemed very optimistic and sure that there will not be an issue about English since it is the societal language and the child will be using it in almost every aspect of its life. Although, one participant have some fears since the child will be familiar with two languages and the participant is afraid that this might be confusing for the child. Even though the interviewee plans to speak to the child in Greek and in English there are some fears about child's fluency in English especially during his young age.

It is obvious that participants, who are Greek native speakers, want to immerse their children in English even though they want to maintain Greek as well. Most of them do not worry about this and as one participant said:

“I think it will come naturally as the time evolves with my child going to the English speaking nursery, school, childcare centre etc. I do not worry about it because the school will help on this.”

Participants think it will come easily through social interactions and of course school which seems to be trusted by all the participants. Since the child will go to an English school, the interaction with the English language will be dominant. It seems to be relieving that the children will have English friends and schoolmates and they will hear English everywhere as well. It is important for children to have a healthy social life and participants' views show that they want to support their children into developing social relationships with native English speakers.

After all, friendship is extremely important and family networks are providing emotional and practical support on bilingualism and its language practices (King & Fogle, 2006, p. 703). Also, English activities within the family will enhance this. The participants who will also speak in English with their child are thinking of singing English songs, reading English books, watch English movies and animations. However, one participant mentioned that if the child will be struggling to cope with English and could not cope at school because of Greek at home then advice will be asked by a specialist.

To sum up, it is important for participants to preserve their native language but it is also essential for them to take care of their children's capacity in English. They are planning through daily interactions to enhance both languages and even though English will play the major role in children's lives, participants do not seem to be extremely worried about their fluency.

Parenthood

It seems that parenthood is a great responsibility and joy for participants and their heritage and culture play a major role into shaping their parental practices and perspectives. However, the international environment might have influenced their thoughts on parenthood in a way.

One of the childrearing aspects that is mentioned by most participants is being respectful to family values. Family is considered as very important in Greece and participants want their children to grow up knowing this. After all, parents are the ones who shape children's experiences and in many ways they set boundaries for family life but also for their children's future adult life (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 57). Being close to your family is a huge part of Greek culture and it is something which is essential to be taught to children. As one participant said:

“I want my children to be proud of their family. In my family we take care of each other and it is important to respect the older members of the family.”

Hence, as it was mentioned in a previous sub-heading, family mealtimes are an important aspect of the family life which enhances the bond among the family members; therefore it is a common practice in a Greek family. As another participant explained, Greek family is broad since it does not just include the parents and the children. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousin and godparents are important members of the family which is usually gathered to celebrate happy events.

One participant pointed out her faith in God and said it is important to raise her child as an Orthodox Christian. She has no intention to force her child into religious faith but as she said through faith and religion children are being taught what is bad and what is good. Furthermore, all participants plan to baptize their children and probably the baptism is going to take place in Greece where the whole family will have the chance to be together and celebrate this happy event.

Another interviewee mentioned that:

“It is important to pass to my child my experiences and to make it strong and mature in order to be able to face the society. I want to transmit to my child some knowledge and awareness so it would be able to protect its self in the future from obvious dangers and to be a kind and clever person.”

The participant said that these are aspects that every parent wants its child to have but she thinks that her culture is a little bit more protective over children. She does not want to be overprotective but as she said Greek childrearing is aware of possible threats and dangers. She thinks that she wants to keep a balance between her culture views and what she has learned from her abroad experience. After all, as James & James say (2012, pp. 84-85) parenting has a leading role in child protection even though it might vary between cultures. Other participants said that when they moved to the United Kingdom they had no plans on having children; therefore their parental practices and views on parenthood have been created recently.

It seems that even though participants are living in a different country than the one in which they have been raised at, their thoughts regarding parenting have not been shaped completely by host culture. As an interviewee said:

“I have some fears for the unknown future but as long as there will be love among my family, everything will be ok [...] I am bringing with me all the things I have learned in my country and I try to be positive about my child’s life here.”

Living abroad has helped them appreciate some aspects of their culture or has reshaped their perspective on some issues. For example, one participant said that living in the United Kingdom made her realize the importance of a multicultural environment. The participant said that the United Kingdom is the perfect place to live in order to be familiar with cultures from all over the world since there are so many immigrants there and this is something that she did not learn as a child but she is happy her child will extend its horizons.

Most participants agreed that after spending the last few years in the United Kingdom, they feel more open-minded and they are glad to see many parents there to raise their children in the way they prefer, rather than having constant external intervention from almost everyone as it is common in their country of origin. It is common due to immigration to be influenced in some way and usually family relationships, child-rearing practices and socialization goals for child’s development are changing (Cheah et al. 2013, p. 30). Hence, participants think that the United Kingdom is a very good place to raise your children and have a family life. As one participant said:

“I think the United Kingdom, apart from the health system, is a well organized and balanced country in matters of parenthood.”

However, one participant said that it would be better to raise its child back in Greece instead of the United Kingdom since it is difficult to cope with the British mentality.

On the whole, participants mainly seem to think they are influenced positively by the host culture and they want to adopt some of its aspects in combination with some aspects from their own culture. Adapting in the culture of the host country might be difficult sometimes but they seem confident and they see this as a chance to bridge the culture differences and offer a better life and future to their children.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The current thesis has explored the views, thoughts, plans and perspectives of future parents about bicultural and bilingual parenthood. Five interviews were conducted with Greek participants who are now living in the United Kingdom; therefore in this section I will include a summary of the main findings and I will also critically reflect upon the whole research process as well as possible limitations of the study. In addition, I will discuss about factors and aspects of the research process that have direct or indirect influence on the study results.

This study exclusively aimed at finding out whether it is important for people who plan to become parents to maintain their culture and native language while raising their children. The four themes I found during thematic analysis were analyzed in the analysis section under different sub-headings and included: “significance, values and negative aspects”, “planning practices and strategies”, “language” and “parenthood”.

Participants expressed their views about the importance of cultural and language maintenance since they all wish their future children to be familiar with their country of origin. All participants share positive thoughts about bilingualism and biculturalism and they point out how beneficial it would be for their children to receive different language messages and be in a multicultural environment. Their views are related to what Romaine says (1995, pp. 107-118) about bilingual children, since they have an advantage, as they tend to be more sensitive and flexible over the different language messages since bilingualism might have a positive influence on the cognitive development of the child.

On the other hand, a few participants also pointed out some negative aspects of their culture which they want to avoid. They are conscious about their plans and decisions since they think that living abroad would help them raise their children in a better way. Racism, discrimination, stereotypes, gossip and rudeness are some of the aspects they wish to avoid while their ancestors’ culture, customs, tradition, roots, language and history are some of the aspects they want their children to be familiar with. Even though there are some negative Greek aspects, according to the informants, they report feeling proud of their ethnicity and want their children to be able to speak their mother tongue especially with their relatives back in Greece.

Since the maintenance of native language and culture seems to be important for participants, they are willing to familiarize their children with some aspects of their country of origin through some practices and strategies. Traditions seem to play a major role in Greek culture; therefore they promote participants' plans and methods, always through sentimental bonds, love and respect. Important celebrations, events and festivities such as Easter enhance the creation of sentimental bonds among the family members since the whole Greek family is gathered together. Through habits and traditions, children have the chance to approach Greek culture and become a part of it. Reading Greek books, listening to Greek music, watching Greek movies and cooking Greek food are some practices that participants are planning to adopt in order to maintain their culture and language. It seems that the above practices will help children to gain knowledge on their heritage and as pointed out by Scecsi & Szilagyi (2012, p. 274) cultural identity could be strengthened especially when children are talking with relatives over Skype.

The study confirms that maintaining Greek language is also a major topic for participants even though some of them plan to speak to their children in both Greek and English. They believe that family is the one factor that can manage maintaining the native language successfully and that a child can learn how to speak Greek through their daily communication with its parents. This point of view is similar to what Bingham et al. say (2013, p. 395) about the interaction between the parent and the child which offers to child the opportunity to be familiar with the spoken language and influences its vocabulary development as this interaction has an impact on its language growth. Moreover, attending Greek school during the weekends is a common practice participants consider for their children since they see themselves as continuers of the Greek language and they recognize the positive effects that bilingualism would have on their children. However, they are aware of the importance of English since they are living in the United Kingdom and some participants believe that English is more important than Greek because their children are going to use this language daily and almost in every aspect of their lives. But in general, as one participant said: "the main goal is to keep a balance between the two languages".

In order to achieve their bilingual and bicultural goals, participants want to combine both their own culture and the host culture as well. Living abroad in an international environment might have influenced participants' thoughts on parenthood in a way but on the other hand some of their views have already been shaped by the

country of origin. After all, some aspects of parenting styles are usually formed by culture (Sung 2010, p. 200). In brief, they want what is the best for the welfare and development of their children which includes the positive aspects of both cultures.

During my research, the participants were very willing to help me with my research and I did not face any serious problem during the interviews. The only difficulty I had to deal with was to overcome my stress and fears since I am not an experienced interviewer. I was also worried about using thematic analysis since I was no familiar with this method and I had to learn how to use it in a limited period of time.

The major challenge I faced during this study was selecting and translating the data into English without distorting its meanings. Also, I am not familiar with conducting interviews; therefore organizing an interview guide was a huge challenge for me since it was essential to ask the right questions in order to fulfill my research. Translating the data was a time-consuming and challenging procedure since I had to reconsider the translation in some parts in order not to distort participants' meanings.

This study was conducted in a particular context and the limited number of participants does not allow direct application of the results to other immigrants with different backgrounds. However, the limited collected data from just five participants allow an in-depth analysis of their planned language and cultural practices.

Even though the participants shared thoughts that they have discussed with their partners, the interviews do not represent the views and opinions of both the wives and husbands since the interviews were conducted individually. The criteria for choosing specific participants were primarily limited to the expectation of a child; therefore other factors such as participants' ages or education level were not decisive in the selection of participants.

The broad findings such as participants' views about Greece's international image or the effects of economical crisis could have provided an opportunity for examining a different aspect of participants' plans and thoughts on raising their future children in terms of bilingualism and biculturalism. Although the negative implications of keeping ties with the heritage culture and language was not the main research question, the study suggests that participants expect that a mixed cultural environment will give the chance to their children to avoid aspects from their country of origin that they do not like. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies showing the importance of the balance between the two different cultures,

since “becoming bilingual is an integration strategy” because both cultures co-exist (Uttal & Han 2011, p. 442). Parenting might vary between cultures (James & James 2012, pp. 84-85) and cultural notions could affect parental decisions about raising their children in terms of bilingualism (King & Fogle 2005, p. 697). Many immigrant parents have positive views about bilingualism and biculturalism as they think that this would enhance their children’s capacity to learn multiple languages (Mosty et al. 2013, p. 11) and they believe that when the native language is preserved there is a connection with the family and when the host language is approached there is a connection with the world outside the family (Leyendecker et al. 2018, p. 62).

In conclusion, the present study shows that language and culture maintenance is essential in the globalized world we live in and proves that every language has its own social value. English has a reputation as a global language and being a fluent English speaker seems essential; therefore the best thing according to future parents is to keep a balance between the two languages. The combination of both cultures is a chance to bridge the culture differences, extend someone’s horizons and offer a better life and future to the next generation.

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Appendix 1: Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: Braun & Clarke 2008, p. 87

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

1. What has brought you and your partner in the United Kingdom? Did you have plans on starting a family when you moved there?
2. Would you want your child to be familiar with your culture? If yes/no why?
3. What aspects of your own culture you want to transmit to your child and which ones you want to avoid?
4. How do you plan to familiarize your child with your heritage culture in your daily life? What practices or habits from your culture you want to pass to your child? (e.g. food, music)
5. What language are you planning to speak to your child? Will your partner use the same language? Why? Why not?
6. Do you think you are going to be consistent to this choice of yours?
7. What are the reasons for this choice?
8. In case of speaking your heritage language to your child, in what level you wish your child's language capacity would evolve? Are you planning to send your child to a Greek school or having private Greek lessons?
9. Do you feel worried about your child's capacity and development in the societal language? Do you think one of the two languages has priority over the other one?
10. Since you aren't an English native speaker how are you planning to immerse your child in its societal language development during its daily life?
11. What childrearing practices/ advices from your origin country you find useful and would like to adopt?
12. Have your thoughts about parenthood changed since you moved to UK? If so in which way? Have this influenced your parenting plans?

Appendix 3: Sample of the letter of consent

Dear Participant,

I would like to invite you to participate in my research on heritage culture and language in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment. For my research I need to conduct individual Skype interviews which will be recorded.

Title of the research: Planning parenthood: How important is it for young couples who are planning to become parents to maintain their cultural heritage and heritage language while raising their children in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment?

Name of the researcher: Maria Stratigi

Name of the degree and the University: Master's Degree in Child Studies, Linköping University, Sweden.

Your participation in this study will not require more than thirty minutes and your anonymity is assured.

The collected data will be used for research purposes only and will not be made available over the Internet and to anyone outside the research project.

Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time.

The research is part of my master's studies and it will be presented in the University. Please note that the report may be used for any other academic purposes later with the consent of the researcher.

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the study.

You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

I agree to participate in the study. As part of my consent, I agree to be recorded.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

