TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES AS PUBLIC SPACES:
MULTILINGUALISM, IDEOLOGIES AND IDENTITY ONLINE

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In sociolinguistic research, the family has been traditionally considered a private domain for language use (Fishman 1991). Social space, however, is negotiated between actors with their discursive power, material constraints, and spatial practices (Lefebvre 1991, Massey 2005), with new media allowing private space to become public space. In post-modern European society, international mobility has contributed to a diversity of transnational families, with multilingualism as a dominant cultural feature (Lanza & Li Wei 2016). Ideologies about languages and speakers of various languages are indeed inherent in many media presentations of families with an immigrant background in Europe. The family has increasingly come under scrutiny in sociolinguistics as a space for language learning and use through studies of family language policy (King & Fogle 2013; Curdt-Christiansen 2013). Indeed the family is a ‘community of practice’, a social unit that has its norms for speaking, acting and believing and hence provides a focus on praxis, the cornerstone for language socialization and identity construction (Lanza 2007). In my presentation, I will discuss the transnational family as a space for language (learning) and how this space has become public, with a special emphasis on mediatized discourses on transnational families and online parental blogging sites for multilingual families. I will argue that in the current digital age, there is a growing need to examine the role of technology in studies of family language policy, in order to shed light on issues of multilingualism, ideologies and identity.

References