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“I thought it would be easier”

Finnish Parents’ Experiences and Thoughts on Bilingual Upbringing Outside Finland

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Globaalin liikkuvuuden ansiosta kaksi- ja monikieliset perheet ovat lisääntymässä myös maissa, jotka ovat perinteisesti toimineet pääasiassa yhdellä kielellä. Useamman kielen yhtäaikaista omaksumista lapsuudessa, sekä siihen liittyviä strategioita, on tutkittu laajasti, mutta vanhempien kokemukset ja näkemykset ilmiöstä eivät aina pääse esille yhtä laajasti. Oman äidinkielen, josta tässä tutkimuksessa puhutaan perintökielenä, siirtämiseen liittyviä merkityksiä ja syitä on kuitenkin tutkittu aiemminkin. Kokemukset ja strategiat ovat kuitenkin monesti painottuneet kielitieteilijöiden havaintoihin omissa perheissään, sekä keskittyneet mittaamaan niiden tuottamia tuloksia kielitasoissa. Tämän tutkielman tarkoitus onkin perehtyä vanhempien omiin tuntemuksiin ja kokemuksiin monikielisestä kasvatuksesta mittaamatta heidän valintojensa tuloksia. Samalla tutkielma tarkastelee esille nousevia määritelmiä, joita kaksi- ja monikielisyyteen saatetaan liittää, sekä niiden mahdollista merkitystä monikielisen identiteetin rakentumiseen. Tutkittaviksi valikoituivat ulkosuomalaiset vanhemmat, jotta kokemukset rajautuisivat juuri perintökielen siirtämiseen, mikä mahdollistaisi yhteisen kulttuuritaustan vaikutuksen tarkastelun. Tutkimuksen lähestymistavaksi valikoitui kvalitatiivinen sisällönanalyysi, joka mahdollisti aineistosta nousevien kokemusten laajan tarkastelun.

Aineistosta nostettiin esille syyt ja alkutilanteet, joiden pohjalta vanhemmat olivat päätyneet siirtämään perintökieltä, ajatusten ja tilanteiden muutokset, kielten käyttö arjessa, eri strategioiden toimivuus, ympäristön reaktiot, vanhempien kokemukset lastensa kielitasosta sekä näkemykset monikielisyyden tulevaisuudesta. Kokemusten ohessa huomiota kiinnitettiin myös kulttuuri-identiteetin ja kieleen liittyvän kompetenssin merkitykseen kasvatuksessa ja siihen, miten ne mahdollisesti toimivat monikielisyyden määritelminä. Aineisto toi esille ilmiön moninaisuuden ja sen, kuinka tapaus- ja tilannekohtaisesti monikielisyyttä toteutetaan ja koetaan perheissä. Identiteetti ja kompetenssi nousivat esille, mutta aineisto ei anna yksiselitteistä määritelmää siitä, miten ulkosuomalaiset yleisesti määrittelevät monikielisyyden. Vastauksista käy kuitenkin esille, kuinka vanhemmat erittelevät kielen hallinnan eri alueisiin, sekä ymmärrys monikielisen kasvatuksen haasteista ja sensitiivisyys sen saralla. Päällimmäisenä tunteena kokemuksista kuitenkin heijastuu vanhempien pääasiassa positiivinen asenne monikielistä kasvatusta kohtaan sekä sen tuottama ilo ja palkitsevuus, kuten myös toive ilmiön laajentumisesta ja ymmärryksen lisääntymisestä. Tutkimuksen pohjalta nousi useampia jatkotutkimusehdotuksia, kuten millainen vaikutus vanhempien monikielisyyden määrittelyllä on lapsen kieli-identiteettiin ja miten käsitykset ja määritelmät muuttuvat uudessa ympäristössä tai kokemuksen myötä. Myös kulttuurissa jaettujen käsitysten ja määritelmien tutkimus voisi olla hedelmällistä monikielisesti kasvavien lasten identiteetin ja kielten kehityksen tukemiseksi.

Avainsanat: monikielisyys, kaksikielisyys, kasvatus, vanhemmuus, monikielinen kasvatus, ulkosuomalaiset

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Globalisation has made moving between countries easier than ever before which is also visible in the growing numbers of bilingual families residing in countries that have traditionally been monolingual. Acquiring multiple languages since childhood and strategies involved have been widely research, however, parental experiences and perceptions on the phenomenon are not gaining as much attention. Reasons and meanings behind passing on one's mother tongue, which in this thesis will be referred to as heritage language, have still been researched in the past too. Experiences and strategies have often been strongly focused on linguists' observations in their own families and measured the language levels achieved during the process. This thesis work aims to look into parental experiences and feelings in relation to bilingual upbringing without attempt to measure outcomes of their choices. Additionally, the study will examine definitions and concepts that are sometime linked with bilingualism, and their meaning to forming a bilingual identity. Finnish migrants were chosen as focus group to limit the experiences to touch passing on the heritage language and to see possible connections caused by the shared cultural background. Approach selected for the study is qualitative content analysis which allowed diverse examination of the experiences included in the data.

Themes raised from the data were as follows: reasons and starting points behind passing on the heritage language, changes in thoughts and situations, use of the languages in everyday life, methods in practice, environments' reactions, parents' thoughts on children's language levels and visions of the future of bilingualism. In addition, attention was paid to meaning of cultural identity and language competence, and how they possibly defined bilingualism. The data showed how diverse the phenomenon is. Bilingualism is experienced differently in each family and practices are strongly based on individual needs and situations. Language competence and identity appeared in the data, but it was not possible to make solid conclusion of how Finnish migrants define bilingualism. However, the responses did show how parents separated different skills of language competence and they appeared to understand the sensitivity and complexity of the phenomenon. Ultimately the responses highlighted the joy of bilingualism and how rewarding experience it was for the family. The parents had positive attitudes towards bilingualism and hoped the phenomenon and awareness of it would keep growing in the future. At the end it is suggested that future research could look into whether parents' definitions of bilingualism affect children's language identity, and if they do how? Researching how definitions and thoughts are altered in new environments and situations could also produce interesting information on the phenomenon. Lastly research on shared views and definitions of bilingualism inside a culture could bring in fruitful information to support identity formation and language acquisition of bilingual children.

Keywords: bilingualism, bilingual upbringing, parenting, Finnish migrants, multilingualism

Contents

Introduction

According to the Finnish Ministry of the Interior and Suomi-seura ry there are almost two million Finnish migrants living outside Finnish borders out of whom around 300 000 have Finnish citizenship (Sisäministeriö, 2021; Suomi-Seura ry, 2021). The largest numbers of these migrants resit in Sweden, the US and Canada, but overall, most Finnish citizens moving abroad move inside the European Union (Sisäministeriö, 2021). For those second, third or even further down generation Finns, the connecting trait these days is the awareness of Finnish background and need to cherish their heritage and identity with Finland (Sisäministeriö, 2021). Language is one element often connected with cultural heritage and identity which is visible in the way migrant parents pass on their heritage language even when there is no goal of returning back to their country of origin (e.g., Souza, 2015; Velázquez, 2019). When parents pass on their heritage language their children have a chance of becoming bilingual, meaning they can speak more than one language. Migrant children are often also early bilinguals who acquire their languages before the age of six (De Houwer, 1999). However, not all migrant parents decide to pass on their languages and not all children growing up in a bilingual household or environment acquire fluency in their heritage languages (De Houwer, 1999; Verdon, McLeod & Winsler, 2014; Hassinen, 2005).

Bilingualism is a widely researched field of study; simultaneous bilingualism, sequential bilingualism, early bilingualism, bilingual language acquisition, bilingual language competence and the list would go on. Yet, bilingualism intrigues not only linguists who are trying to determine how bilinguals' inner language system works but also parents of bilinguals and those who are bilinguals themselves. When looking up different Facebook groups of Finnish people living abroad one can see that discussions and posts related to bilingualism gain lots of comments quickly. People want to ask for help with bilingual upbringing, share their experiences and relate with those in a similar situation. Based on my own background and following those online conversations, I decided that bilingualism was something I wanted to focus on in this master's thesis work. I wanted to gain more knowledge of this field of study that seems to divide opinions and does not have simple definitions. Moreover, I wanted to dive into those experiences and the reality of a family life with multiple languages.

Bilingualism is often seen as a natural outcome when couples with different first languages have children or in the case of migrant families (De Houwer, 2009; Grosjean, 2010). Children

will automatically immerse all the languages spoken around them and parents naturally speak their heritage language to their children. This is not the case, however (De Houwer, 2009). Migrant parents might decide to use only the community language even at home to make sure their children become fluent in it to succeed in their current home country (Verdon, McLeod & Winsler, 2014; Grosjean 1982). Alternatively, the challenges of bilingual upbringing and balancing the exposure of language can become too much to keep up with (Verdon, McLeaod & Winsler, 2014). Different "types" of bilingualisms are also valued differently (Martin, 2018; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). While it is desirable for upper classes to gain competence in multiple languages and immersion schools are widely popular around the world, immigrant or minority bilingualism is not always nearly as supported but rather seen as a risk for traditionally monolingual societies (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Martin, 2018). The fact that especially simultaneous bilingualism has been seen to cause semilingualism might have led many bilingual couples to choose monolingual upbringing instead (Grosjean, 2010). The idea that bilingualism causes language delays is still visible today, even in the data used in this master's thesis, and parents might think it is better to learn one language properly first (Grosjean, 2010; Nymark, 2021).

As said my own background was one of the reasons to choose bilingualism to be part of my thesis. My father and his siblings grew up to be bilingual in Sweden with Finnish speaking parents, yet none of us cousins were raised bilingually, simultaneously or early at least. Me and my siblings grew up only speaking Finnish and acquired other languages through schooling, whereas my cousins grew up in Sweden speaking Swedish. I could be seen as a prime example of how, despite favourable settings; close perimeters to Sweden, and Swedish being second official language of Finland, a bilingual parent, early simultaneous bilingualism is not an automatic outcome if parents do not decide to aspire for it. Another interesting fact, connected with how bilingualism is being determined, has also been part of my life. Whilst I have acquired a relatively high competence in another language later on many of my friends nor even my mother would not count me as bilingual due to the fact that I have not grown up bilingually. In contrast my father despite not holding similar fluency in Swedish today would be considered bilingual due to his background.

In the past I have also au-paired in families that have wished for their children to become bilingual either because one of them was heritage language speaker or because they saw that bilingualism would aid their children in the future. Additionally, while living abroad on multiple occasions I have realised that it might be my own future as well if ever having children. As an educator, and a language teacher, I am interested in how to support children who come from

heritage language backgrounds and what is the reality in bilingual families. The topic of this thesis was thus chosen and narrowed down based on my personal and professional background, as well as my general interest in linguistics.

The encounters I have had, and my own experiences led me more towards seeking out how bilingualism is experienced in the families rather than how the languages of bilinguals develop or how to achieve the highest and most balanced competences. Moreover, I was interested in parents' experiences and how possible perceptions related to bilingualism could be visible in their experiences. Would they seemingly place more value on competence, usage or age of acquisition when defining who is bilingual? How would they describe and approach those linguistic patterns common with early bilinguals if they themselves had acquired a second language later on? How do the experiences match with the previous research done in this field? I also wanted to focus on the experience of passing on heritage languages, to learn the challenges faced when passing on a language that is not the community language or even official language in the country of residence.

There are similar research done as the one carried out for this thesis, closest possibly being Braun and Cline's (2014) study focusing on trilingual families. Their book offers valid comparison between participants' experiences here and what has been observed earlier in similar studies. Studying parents experiences this way can give an alternative view to studies done by linguists with their own children such as Saunders (1988). Linguists who have studied and researched bilingualism have admittedly a different understanding and approach to the process than those who only encounter the issues once they face them in practice. Karhu (2018) has also done a thesis that looked into parents' experiences and perceptions related bilingualism; however, her focus was narrowed to parents who themselves were bilingual. In contrast to Braun and Cline's (2014) and Karhu's (2018) work this current thesis will include bilingual families with a larger spectrum in the sense that families might live their lives through two or more languages and participants in this research might have initially grown up either monolingual or bilingual themselves. Bilingual term in this research thus does not exclude those with more than two languages, the term choice will be explained in the theory part of the thesis. Another difference between this thesis and Braun and Cline's (2014) book Language Strategies for Trilingual Families: Parents' Perspectives, is that the focus group here was narrowed down to Finnish parents. Braun and Cline's (2014) research involved parents from the UK and Germany with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Previous research related to migrants often focuses on larger languages and nationalities, who have often migrated to the US, Latin and Asian minorities being possibly the most researched groups (e.g., Kennedy & Romo, 2014; Kondo-Brown, 2006; Rodríquez, 2015; Oh & Fuligni, 2010). De Houwer (1999) has already done research related to how parental beliefs and attitudes affect their own language use as well as their children's bilingual development. Based on her article it seems that parental beliefs and attitudes can have a big effect on children's bilingualism (De Houwer, 1999). The heritage languages' role on family relationships in immigrant background families has been studied by Oh and Fulligni (2010) and meaning making in bilingual families by Hua and Wei (2016). Palviainen and Bergroth (2018) have even researched how ideology and linguistic identity are present in discourses with Finnish bilingual families. Their study and participants were set in Finland whereas this study will look into those Finnish people who have moved abroad and mostly have non-Finnish partners.

As shows, the previous studies share similarities with this thesis but they also differ from each other. While the objective is to look into ideas and experiences related to bilingualism the focus here is rather in the holistic experience not only in language strategies as it has been in Braun and Cline's (2014) case nor is it limited to ideas present in the data as in Palviainen and Bergroth's study (2018). Rather these objectives are twined together in this thesis work and their connection to one and another is debated.

With the previously presented objectives in mind the research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What kind of experience do Finnish parents have in relation to bilingual upbringing outside of Finland?
2. What type of perceptions related to bilingualism are visible in the data?

As the focus of this research is on parental experiences, and mostly in the home environment, bilingual upbringing here falls under informal learning and home upbringing instead of formal education or upbringing. The strategies involved with bilingual upbringing at home and differences between it and formal language learning will be discussed more in the theory part of the thesis. The theory part, which follows right after the introduction, will also present the reader with insight into how bilingualism can be determined, how language acquisition usually goes and some basic terminology that will help with understanding the thesis better**.** Moreover, the term choices done for the thesis will be explained in the theory.

The thesis follows patterns of a basic qualitative research and methodology used with the data is content analysis. Choices for these approaches and coding will be opened up in the methods part. Additionally, the methodology part will go through the data collection methods and information related to the participants. After the methodology part the thesis will move on to its analysis part, which present the findings and examples of the data. Findings are followed by reliability analysis of the thesis before finally reaching to conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Framework

The research done for this thesis is not based on any existing theory as such nor does it try to prove or disapprove any. Thus, the theoretical framework will focus on opening up the terminology used in the thesis and explain how they connect with the research done.

2.1 Bilingual Upbringing

As this research focuses on experiences related to bilingual upbringing it is essential to consider what type of upbringing it is focusing on and what exactly is bilingual upbringing.

Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.a) defines upbringing follows:

"the way in which you are treated and educated when young, especially by your parents, especially in relation to the effect that this has on how you behave and make moral decisions"

Education, and learning, are then often divided into informal and formal (OECD, n.d.). Formal education is considered to be something that is always intentional, has objectives and is structured and carried out by trained professionals or authorities (OECD, n.d.; O'Neill, 2019). This type of education and learning would often take place in schools and other institutions (OECD, n.d.). As a contrast, informal learning and education are then, at least from the learner's point of view, unintentional and happen through experience (OECD, n.d.). OECD (n.d.) marks that informal learning often takes place at home or during one's leisure time. Combining the definition of upbringing (Cambridge University Press, n.d.a) and informal learning (OECD, n.d.) we can conclude that informal upbringing happens at home and is mostly done by one's parents. Whereas formal upbringing would be something we acquire at schools and other institutions. Informal upbringing can be seen relying more on parents and guardians' personal values and choices as they are the main caregivers and influence on children's lives. However, when multiple options are available and considered, formal upbringing can be partly a choice made by parents as they can pick a type of school or pre-school programme based on their own values and objectives (e.g., Karlsson, Löfdahl & Pérez Prieto, 2012). Ultimately, it can be said that the type of upbringing children have is a choice made by their parents or guardians, whether conscious or unconscious.

Bilingual upbringing is thus also a choice which dependents on parents' own backgrounds and values (Hassinen, 2005). To bring up one's children bilingually means that there is a desire that

the children will be able to communicate, use and understand more than one language (Hassinen, 2005; Grosjean, 2010). Migrant, bilingual, minority and heritage language parents might have reasons that are more linked with identity and cultural conservation than advantages and status bilingualism might bring (Grosjean, 2010). Parents who have primarily grown up as monolingual in a monolingual environment (Grosjean, 1982), and who live in their birth country, might then choose a bilingual upbringing for those latter reasons to gain status quota of elite bilingualism (Grosjean, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas 1981). The reasons and methods used by parents can vary depending on which of these two "categories" they belong to. The reasons and methods behind choices of "monolingual" parents living in their birth environment are not part of this research's objectives and thus they will not be discussed further in this theory section either.

As mentioned during the introduction bilingualism might seem like a natural choice in families where parents speak multiple languages and, as my data will show parents can see it like that too. However, as not all bilingual parents end up bringing their children up bilingually it can be seen as a choice as any other choice done when bringing up children; the amount of screen time, media consumed in the house, cursing, religion and traditions involved in family life. The choice can be based on long consideration or it might be a more unconscious one (Grosjean, 1982). Once parents have done the primary decision of passing on their languages to their children, they probably choose how to do it, which methods to use and what are the family practices with each language (Grosjean, 1982; Grosjean, 2010). Sometimes these methods can go through trial-and-error phases, parents notice some practices work better than others and follow those experiences. From the very first choice that is bringing up one's children bilingually, parents' decisions are most likely based on their own values, experiences and aims with raising a child, just like in any area of parenting (Grosjean, 2010). So, what are some differences between formal and informal bilingual upbringing and what are the methods parents might apply during this journey?

When learning a language in a formal environment one is usually taught the standard version of the language with certain rules for grammar and vocabulary to use, which can be seen for example if English as a foreign language teaching (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2018). The learning is measured by tests and curriculums have certain aims, topics and level of language to achieve (Finkbeiner, 2017). Additionally, the language use might be restricted inside the classroom if the language in question is not widely used in the surrounding society. In informal settings, such as at home, one is not necessarily guided by a trained professional or an expert

of a field who has immersed into linguistics or language learning in any way. The level of language might never be measured by any formal means or even recognised before one is applying for jobs and can freely list it as a skill. Moreover, the language modelled might be rather a dialect and less formal than the standardised version of the language. Whether mono- or bilingual our first language tends to be the spoken less formal version of the language with more relaxed grammar rules and at school we are then taught and adapted to use more formal styles (Grosjean, 2010).

As this research focuses on bilingual upbringing that starts from home and is occasionally supported by the environment, I will explain some methods and choices that parents might take upon to achieve early bilingualism, and that might occur in participants' responses. I will leave out the methods often adopted by schools and other institutions in their language teaching as they are not relevant for this research. However, there might be occasional notes if some methods and ideas are also shared with second language education research as they might give perspective and explanation, as well as support certain experiences and views that come up in the data.

Language immersion schools, classes and clubs can be one method of bringing on and supporting bilingual upbringing. In 1982 Grosjean wrote how immersion schools might fall behind when it comes to practical and social use of the second language as the student body might not use the language outside the school system. A more recent study carried out by Smala, Bergas Paz and Lingard (2012) in Australia, noted how immersion programmes are often used by otherwise monolingual families to achieve more prestigious status for their children. Some of these programmes might actually even refuse to take in those with migrant and heritage language background (Smala, Begas Paz & Lingard, 2012). These examples show that immersion schools are at times used by monolingual families to achieve bilingualism and to gain assets for the future. Grosjean (1982) also noted that in monolingual countries the education system does not tend to be interested in maintaining children's bilingual status. Still, there is no denying they can be great assets for bilingual families, and it seem that heritage language parents tend to use immersion schools and clubs to support their linguistic goals when they are available (Rodríquez, 2015; Kennedy & Romo, 2013; Souza, 2015). However, for smaller language groups and in rural areas they are not always available, which was visible in my own data through the lack of mentions.

Time and place set language usage can be effective to a certain extent, for example when the division is clear and logical such as limiting usage of one language to home, and another to school and the outside world. Still, basing language usage practices on time and place might limit the input of certain languages and thus lead to those languages being weaker than others (Grosjean, 2010). Using a certain language during a certain time such as one day for one language or using one when having dinner can be hard to maintain as the language division is not "natural" and meaningful (Döpke, 1994; Grosjean, 2010). One well known method is so called One Parent-One Language method, which from now on will be referred to as OPOL in this thesis work. In OPOL each parent uses their chosen language; community, heritage, minority, first, second or whichever the language's status is (Park, 2008). OPOL can be followed either strictly or more loosely depending on family's aims and needs (Park, 2008). There might even be another language used when the whole family is present if the parents do not speak each other's first languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Setting the rules and practices for family's language use can be a challenging task especially if parents do not understand each other's languages or have differing views (Park, 2008). Older siblings can also make it hard to maintain the practices as they tend to mandate the languages used between siblings (Braun & Cline, 2014). Grosjean (2010) and Park (2008) both also note the limitations of OPOL being similar to time and place set placed language choice, the exposure might be limited and difficult for the parent if they are the only one constantly speaking the heritage language to the child.

Practices in families can even combine the different methods and in addition to these divisions of language use they can adopt other tools to support and add the language input. Such tools can be using different media in the minority or heritage language; books, movies, games and so on, or visiting the countries and forming communities where the language is used more and staying in contact with grandparents and friends who speak the language (Döpke, 1994; Rodríquez, 2015; Kennedy & Romo, 2014; Grosjean, 2010). When using media, however, there is a need for parents to make it interactive to make it effective and meaningful (Grosjean, 2010). Today, online learning tools are also aiding the process but sometimes they can be too formal and artificial for bilingual children, they can also feel like additional schoolwork which does not engage everyone. When one tries to teach home languages at home, when they are not offered outside, they might face similar challenges as in second language classrooms. If the material used does not match the learners' age, language level, needs and interests they might lose interest to learn and maintain the language, and it can be hard to find such materials for some languages (Arianie, 2017; Tomlinson, 2017).

There are likely even more methods and ways of bringing children up bilingually, but the methods and tools introduced here are most commonly mentioned in the previous research and also in the data of this research. It can sometimes be hard to define what is the exact method used in the family and even my own research shows that rather than having strict rules and practices families tend to have some hybrid versions of methods that suit for their personal needs.

2.2 Bi- or Multilingual?

When talking about people who are able to communicate through more than one language it can be challenging to decide whether to say they are bilingual or multilingual or whether we are talking about multilingualism or bilingualism. As I started my research, I was also faced with the challenge of deciding which term to use as they are often used interchangeably. A reader of this thesis might have noticed already that I eventually decided to use the terms bilingual and bilingualism and this chapter will explain the reasoning behind that decision.

The decision to use only one term comes from need to avoid using multiple terms and to keep research language clear without confusions. This decision was also supported by what Grosjean (2010) writes in his book Bilingual. According to him the term bilingual is more traditionally used to refer to people with two or more languages than multilingual. It has also been used to cover those with not only two but multiple languages (Grosjean, 2010). Similarly, Paradis (2007) includes multilinguals inside the term bilingual in her study. In their book Language Contact and Bilingualism Appel and Muysken (1987) also use bilingualism and bilingual to include situations with two or more languages involved.

It can also be argued that in the recent years multilingualism has started to include not only what we see as standard languages but also dialects, visual communication and body language (Martin, 2016). Standard language is a term used by and borrowed from Auer and Wei (2007). In their book the term refers to what in Euro centric culture has traditionally been seen as language such as German, English, Hindi and so forth. As bilingualism has often focused on standard languages, I decided to follow the example of Grosjean (2010) and Paradis (2007) and use terms bilingual and bilingualism instead of multilingualism. However, it is not rare to see bilingualism including dialects and accents as well (Appel & Muysken, 1987). This decision also helps to reserve the terms multilingual and multilingual communication to include wider aspects of language as they do in Martin's (2018) article. In this research the focus is on families where multiple standard languages are present. Thus, the term bilingualism will not in this case

include dialects, body language or visual communication as separate languages. Sign languages would have naturally been considered as their own individual languages if they had appeared in the data.

Not constantly pointing out or separating those with two languages from those with three languages was also supported by the data itself. While the number of languages involved in families' daily lives varied, the differences in numbers of languages was visible only in experiences related to division of the languages in daily use. This proves that separating for example specifically trilingual families from others would not have been fruitful as experiences were not visibly different from those with two or four languages. Paradis (2007) had come to similar conclusion in her study, pointing out that issues and findings would apply also to those children who had grown up with more than two languages.

While making this decision I was aware that some might feel excluded by the term bilingual if they connect it strictly with being able to speak only two languages. However, using the word multilingual can feel odd or excluding for those who only speak two languages, even though word multilingual just refers to more than one (Grosjean, 2010). I can also see that some, even if raised with more than two languages, might not be comfortable using the term multilingual if their competence in all languages is not at the level where they consider they should be to say they speak that language. Those might prefer the term bilingual instead to not draw attention to the fact that they might be expected to know more than two languages if they use the word multilingual.

The way bilingualism is defined in this thesis, not including accents and dialects et cetera, can seem restricting for some. However, as the goal was to look into experiences of those who live abroad, speak and pass on a different heritage language than their spouse or environment, this way of determining bilingualism was the most logical one. Seeing if the parents had decided to use only French with their children while living in France and they had different accents, it would not have brought up challenges and experiences related to passing on a language that is not spoken in the environment. It is still acknowledged than in other research bilingualism might be determined differently and that instead of bilingualism people might prefer to use word multilingualism as it might feel more inclusive to them. The more profound explanation of who is bilingual in the eyes of this research will be included in the next part of the thesis.

2.3 Language Terms

This chapter's subheadings will aim to explain the meaning of terms used in this thesis when referring to different languages and their status in the families involved. It will be also reasoned why I have decided to use these specific terms instead of some others. Overall, the terms I chose to explain are the ones that appear the most throughout the thesis and have appeared already in the parts prior to this one. The underlying reason to use certain terms is mostly because they seemed like the most inclusive ones and made least assumptions on the language level or identity. Trying to limit the number of terms also felt like it would aid the research to be clear and easy to read, which is why I have tried to choose terms that can often be used as somewhat inclusive umbrella terms.

2.3.1 First and Second Language

First and second language are terms that often appear when reading about bilingualism, language acquisition or learning a new language. In this thesis these terms are not used as much but as they are such key terms on the field of language research and do appear at times in this research as well, it was relevant to explain them. Even so, it was necessary to explain why they are being used scarcely in this thesis specifically.

First language, often referred to as mother tongue, is a term used for the language that a person acquires, as the term suggest, as their first language since birth before any other languages. Simultaneous bilinguals have thus more than one first language, so to say, as they start to acquire multiple languages since the day they are born and even before they are often exposed to those languages while in the womb (Hassinen, 2005). First language is often considered to be one's strongest language that they are most competent in, with monolinguals this is the case (Ahlholm, 2020). With bilinguals it can be hard to determine which is their official first language whether it is determined by the order of acquisition or competence (De Houwer, 2009). Which is why the terms *dominant language* and *weaker language* are often used to show difference in competence or preference (Grosjean, 2010; Grosjean, 1982). As previously discussed, languages are rarely fully balanced and bilinguals can hold different competences in each of their languages (Grosjean, 2010; Saunders, 1988; De Houwer, 2009). The matter of first language attrition and even language forgetting, which will be discussed more in later chapters, also add to the complexity of determining one's first language. Especially for early sequential bilinguals determining one's first language can be a challenging and personal question due to

how they identify with their languages and their heritage (Aalberse, Backus & Muysken, 2019). Additionally, if one's first language has been lost or suffered attrition, or the competence in the language that would traditionally be defined as their first language is not strong and they are not feeling confident with the language, it can wake feelings of shame (Grosjean, 2011; Grosjean, 2010).

Second language is the term used to refer to languages one acquires after their first languages whether the language in question is second, third or fourth (Ahlholm, 2020). Initially it means a language one has not been exposed to at home. For those who are brought up as monolinguals, second language is sometimes used as a synonym to foreign language and is often acquired at school through language lessons (Ahlholm, 2020). Early sequential bilinguals also learn their other languages after their first language, but their competence levels might be more balanced and higher than of those who acquire their second languages later but not necessarily (De Houwer, 2009; Grosjean, 2010). Ahlholm (2020) writes that the older we grow the more the process of language acquisition differs from the acquisition of the first language. For bilinguals, languages learnt outside the home environment can be considered as second languages such as they can for monolinguals (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). As an example, one might have acquired two heritage languages as their first languages at home, but the language of the community is different language and thus it becomes a second languages for a bilingual. Alternatively, if one of the home languages is the language of the community but the language of schooling is different, or they take language lessons at school and learn a second language at school. In some cases, the second language might succeed the first languages in competence if the exposure and use of that language is more consistent and greater than exposure to the firsts (Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 2009). This can be the case when a monolingual family moves abroad for a long period of time, or for good, when the children are young, and the language of the new country becomes more dominant in the children's lives (Appel & Muysken, 1987). It can also happen in the instance of heritage language families where the heritage languages are not getting enough support and exposure (Grosjean, 2012). The language of the community and schooling can overrule in usage and thus become stronger than the first languages acquired at home.

When the terms first and second language are to appear in the text the aim has been to use them only in the situations where there is either clear distinction between first and second language acquisition, or a participant has defined their own first or second language. Another context when the terms might appear is when there is need to distinguish languages learned later on at

school, or other parts of life, from those learnt at young age. Ultimately, the terms are used as scarcely as possible as determining one's first language can be very intimate and personal topic and the goal is to avoid making false assumptions of anyone's linguistic identity or competence.

2.3.2 Heritage Language

Heritage language is a term that has already appeared during this thesis and will be used often in the following parts as well. For those reasons, it is necessary to open the term's meaning in this thesis and why I chose to use it when referring to migrant parents' languages.

In the past heritage language term has been used for example by Oh and Fuligni (2009) when researching language development's connection with identity and family relationships in families with immigrant background. It is used to refer languages are not official languages of the country in question but are used usually by immigrants or minorities in different areas of their lives and that they wish to pass on to their children (Aalberse, Backus & Muysken, 2019; Kondo-Brown, 2006). Moreover, while heritage language teaching might sometimes be offered at schools it differs from foreign language learning as it is initially acquired to some level at home (Kondo-Brown, 2006). I found this term suitable for my own research as it can be used to cover not only Finnish language used by the participants but also their partners' languages whenever those languages are not official languages of the country. Thus, it is an inclusive term that saves time from using different terms for every language.

Another aspect, that was not mentioned in the previous research, but which led me to use this term is that it does not make assumptions of participants' or their partners languages. I personally see that the term heritage language does not lead to assumptions of what are the participants actual first- or mother tongues, thus using the term avoids the problem of accidentally labelling or ranking the languages based on limited information. Instead, the term just points out that the languages in question are the ones that the parents of this research wish to pass on to their children, whether the languages in question are their first or second languages. Heritage language is thus an inclusive term but also a sensitive one to use here. However, the thesis will not be using the term heritage language speaker as it can be even more complex to define than bilingual (Aalberse, Backus, & Muysken, 2019).

To put it simply the term heritage language will in this thesis refer to languages spoken at home that are not official languages in the country of living. They can however at times be also languages of schooling, a term that will be explained later. Terms minority language and community language, which meaning, and usage are explained later, will in this thesis be reserved when writing about countries' official languages.

2.3.3 Languages Outside Home

This section will define the following terms: *community language, home language, language of schooling, majority language* and *minority language* are used when referring to languages spoken outside home environment to make distinctions between languages' statuses. They are necessary terms as some of the participants live in environments where the language used in the community is not the majority language of the country or their children go to a school in which language of instructions differs from languages spoken in the society and at home. Minority and majority languages then are used to show the status of the official languages of the society. The terms also appear at times when writing about participants' partners' languages as they might be either minority or majority language users, to determine those language's status. Thus, the terms do not automatically mean a language is not used at home, except in the case of language of schooling which is reserved for certain cases.

Community language in this thesis is restricted to mean an official language of the environment rather than a language of religious or immigrant community, which it sometimes refers to as well in other research (Kondo-Brown, 2006). However, in some instances one of the home languages can also be a community language. Community language can also be a minority language in the country of resident but a majority in the community one is living in, for example Sami languages in Northern Sweden, Finland and Norway or Catalan in Spain. Community language can be spoken at home as well, either as one of the shared home languages or one of the parents' language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). When the term is used during the thesis it will be pointed out whether it refers to solely a language spoken outside home or if it is also used at home. *Home languages* will then simply refer to languages used at home whether they are heritage or community languages, hold any official status in the society or not. It is used when there is no need to show differences in balance of the languages used at home. Families can have either one or multiple home languages, in the case of this study there are seemingly more than one home language in each family.

Language of schooling term will be used when referring specifically to a language used in school that is not a home language nor a majority community language, however, it can be an official minority language in the country. Irish language is good example of such language, while it is an official language in the country and in some areas majority community language it holds a minority status in most of the country (Ó Murchú, 2016). Still in the recent years so called Gaeltacht schools in which teaching, and instructions are mainly through Irish have become popular even outside Irish speaking Gaeltacht areas and among those whose home languages or first languages are not Irish (O'Brien, 2018). In an instance where a family would not use Irish at home, and they would reside in an area that is majority English speaking, but their children would attend a Gaeltacht school thus the Irish language would not necessarily be a heritage language or community language, but it could be seen as a language of schooling.

Majority and *minority language* will be used when referring to countries' official languages that do not have balanced status among themselves, and one is more used than the other (Nordquist, 2019). While minority language can often refer to immigrant languages it will not be used in that manner here (Grenoble & Roth Singerman, 2017). These two terms will appear rarely and only when there is need to point out the fact that a language spoken at home or in other circumstances is also a minority or majority language in the country. Instead, the community language will mostly be used when talking about the languages of the society as it can cover both minority and majority languages when the goal is only to point out the community around speaks another language than those used at home, or that one of the home languages is also used widely in the society.

Again, some of the terms have been restricted to very limited definitions and usage in certain areas, while acknowledging that in other circumstances they might be used differently. For example, as was mentioned, community language can be used to refer migrant and religious communities' language use, however, in this research using it to that extent would make it overlap with heritage language term. Defining terms this way has hopefully allowed clear definitions and distinctions without them overlapping too much or illogically.

2.4 Bilingualism

While it might seem that bilingualism is a new and growing phenomenon, especially if the culture and country one has lived in is traditionally seen as monolingual, bilingualism has always been part of human interaction (Auer & Wei, 2007). However, how bilingualism has been

seen in the past has varied and more so different types of bilingualism have been valued higher than others. Academic bilingual or a bilingual who has a hold of more prestigious languages has often been seen in a more favourable light than a bilingual who holds a fluency of one or more minority languages (Auer & Wei, 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Additionally, expats' and those growing up with two official languages of the society at home have been valued more than immigrants whose bilingualism has been seen rather as a challenge and threat to the unity of the society they live in (Martin, 2016).

Conflicts are also visible in how the elite has aimed for bilingualism through bilingual education, and other methods, while minority and heritage language speakers might have been discouraged from raising their children simultaneously bilingual (De Houwer, 2009). In the past simultaneous bilingualism has not been seen as admirable way of bringing up children, it has been connected to semilingualism, being a threat to language development and even as a cause for language disorders in general (Grosjean, 2010; Rodríguez, 2015; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). These days the views are shifting, and simultaneous bilingualism is not seen as a cause for language disorders, and it is also debatable whether it even slows down the language development (Döpke, 1996; Döpke, 1994; Döpke 2006; Grosjean, 2010).

In the following chapters I will present the different definitions often used for bilingualism and what does bilingualism mean and refer to in this thesis work, along with explaining some key terminology. They will also explain some basic aspects of language acquisition and usage, the latter especially from bilingual perspective as well as look into some concepts we tend to have of bilinguals: such as bilingual equals bicultural and that bilinguals' language competence should be compared with monolinguals.

2.4.1 Who is Bilingual?

Defining who is bilingual can bring around different opinions and it has even been debated on the field of linguistics. The views have shifted throughout the years but competence has long been one key determiner, in a study done in Finland also showed the view of being bilingual only by birth (Palviainen & Bergroth, 2018). Regular use of more than one language is determiner preferred by Grosjean (2010). This chapter presents some of the common ways used to determine who is and who is not bilingual in order to establish understanding of the previous views that might come up in the data as well. Ultimately, the chapter leads to defining what

bilingualism means in this thesis and who are considered as bilinguals here, as well as to explaining some key terminology that will be used.

Bloomfield (1933): “native-like control of two or more languages” (p.53)

The above quote from Bloomfield is well known and often quoted when defining who is bilingual competence wise. The level of competence demanded to be recognised as bilingual can vary from ability to produce first meaningful and complete utterances in another language (Haugen, 1953) and not necessarily knowing all one’s language equally well (Grosjean & Li, 2013), to Bloomfield’s (1933) very high” native-like” and balanced competence in each language. The native-like control is indeed a high demand and even a bit problematic**.** While in his book Davies (2003) gives a way of defining who is a native speaker, he also writes how a second language learner can become a native speaker too. The fact that Davies (2003) links nativeness to identity and confidence shows it is a complex and sensitive term to use. In this thesis work I have tried to avoid using the term due to how it can be hard to define native speaker without extensive information about the individual in question. However, if terms native like hold or native like accent are to appear in the text, they refer to a language of an average monolingual person who has grown up and lives in a country where their language is the majority language. This is not to define who is a native speaker as such, but to create a comparison by using a definition of competence that is commonly understood and easy for people to grasp. If bilingual considered to be someone who uses two or more languages regularly (Grosjean, 2010), monolingual in this thesis will be used as a reference to a person who has grown up with one standard language and lives through that language with very irregular, if any, usage of another language. Following the monolingual first language acquisition pattern (De Houwer, 2009).

Another way to define bilingual I have come across in real life as well as while doing this research, is by birth or family. One is considered bilingual if they are born into a bilingual family and learn their languages from birth, or at least from very early age. Even if one would later on learn a language to a proficient level, even higher than someone born to a bilingual family, they would be considered less of a bilingual due to their background (Palviainen & Bergroth, 2018). This type of ideology was visible in research conducted in Finnish-Swedish bilingual families by Palviainen and Bergroth (2018) as some of the participants did not see their partners being bilingual despite high proficiency in a language. These kinds of views might be connected to ideology of bilingual being automatically bicultural in identity (Grosjean,

2010). In her article Martin (2018) indicated that this type of bilingualism might even be seen more favourable than bilingualism gained through immigration, despite many child immigrants often being early bilinguals. This way of defining bilingualism seems to include an idea that a person born into a bilingual environment or family will automatically acquire the languages surrounding them up to some level of proficiency. As heritage language and first language losses do happen and some individuals are never even introduced to family's heritage languages or second languages of the community properly, it is not certain that person growing up in bilingual environment will be raised as bilingual (De Houwer, 2009; Grsojean, 2010). Valuing certain type of acquisition pattern over another also shows the inequality in social aspects of bilingualism, which were raised in the data as well. Early bilingualism can be admired more than later, unless it is a question of refugee and immigrant children from certain countries and with certain languages (Martin, 2018; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Higher social class bilingualism is also more aspirational than of those from lower classes (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). This is visible in some educational settings where children's heritage languages are not supported but the goal is to get them acquire the majority language (Grosjean, 1982; Auer & Wei, 2007).

Both determining bilingualism by one's competence or the age of acquisition can be seen as a very restrictive and exclusive way of defining one's bilingualism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Grosjean, 2010). The prior can cause anxiety and shame for those who have experienced loss of language or have not been taught their heritage languages if they are expected to be bilingual due to their background (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). The latter diminishes the achievements of those who have learnt another language once they were teens or adults and puts those who have not had a chance to learn a language from young age in unequal position (Grosjean, 2010). Defining bilingualism based on the regular use of more than one language has been mentioned by Grosjean (2010) on his own and again with Li (Grosjean & Li, 2013). This definition gives more space for individuals to identify themselves and others as bilinguals without ranking anyone's proficiency or background. Regular use is thus more generous than competence and age of acquisition-based definitions.

Before explaining who are considered as bilinguals when doing this research, it is essential to explain some terminology that has already been used and will be used in this thesis. *Early bilingual* commonly refers to a person who has acquired their languages by the age of six (De Houwer, 1999), the age of determining early bilinguals can however vary depending on the research or researcher. *Sequential* or *successive bilingual* refers to a person who has first ac-

quired one language before their other languages (De Houwer, 2009; Grosjean 2010) Simultaneous bilinguals are then those who have acquired their languages at the same time from very beginning (De Houwer, 2009; Grosjean, 2010). None of the terms equal to a person being a *balanced bilingual*, which is a term used of those whose hold of their languages is equal or as the term suggest balanced (Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 2009). It is common that bilinguals have a dominant language or have stronger hold of certain areas of life in different languages rather than being perfectly balanced in all (Saunders, 1988). Both sequential and simultaneous bilinguals can be early bilinguals, however (De Houwer, 2009). It could be seen that simultaneous bilingual is restricted to being also early bilingual because language development and acquisition start from the birth (De Houwer, 2009). *Semilingualism* is something that has been feared and claimed to be a consequence of early bilingualism (Rodríquez, 2015; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). It refers to a situation where one does not have a proper or complete hold of any language and thus their linguistic competence and ability to function and communicate would be somehow incomplete, lacking or hindering (Lucchini, 2009). Today fears for semilingualism are not as strong and issues with language development are seen to be caused by something else other than bilingualism (De Houwer, 2009). The shift, however, does not mean that there would not be traces left from it when reading opinions for and against bilingualism, which the analysis of this thesis will show as well.

While this research mainly focuses on those who have raised their children as simultaneous and early bilinguals, this does not mean that only those who meet these requirements are bilinguals. Additionally, it is not certain that all the participants' children are simultaneous bilinguals, but some might be sequential bilinguals, meaning some of the children might have acquired one of their languages before others. Even participants themselves can be seen as bilinguals, and some of them addressed the fact that they themselves were early bilinguals. With the information received through the data it is not possible to say for sure whether they were simultaneous or sequential bilinguals. While this thesis will refer to early bilinguals and differences between them and later bilinguals, Grosjean's (2010) definition is closer to the view of bilingualism that has been in the background. The thesis will also steer away from defining bilingualism based on competence, especially as high competence as presented by Bloomfield's (1933) native-like hold or what Grosjean (2010) calls special bilinguals.

In the simplest way bilingualism can be defined as the ability to use two languages and bilingual as a person who can use two languages, no matter what the competence is or to what extent they use the languages and how they have acquired the languages. In this research the term

bilingual can refer to any type of bilingualism where two or more languages are involved. Thus, there is no artificial ranking involved based on competence, age or way of acquiring the language. Forcing bilingualism inside specific molds felt unnecessary with the research's objectives in mind. The research does not aim to determine who are real or official bilinguals or what is the "level" of bilingualism participants have achieved with their children. Evidently, not making strict determinations holds the research from making false assumptions of anyone's language identity with limited information of their own experience and background. These choices acknowledge the sensitivity of the topic and hopefully make it approachable for anyone wishing to read more about bilingual experiences.

2.4.2 Language Acquisition

In this research the language acquisition of bilinguals is considered to follow similar path than monolinguals', rather than the one of second language learners. As the focus of the research is on informal upbringing, the idea is that when speaking of the language acquisition in the context of the research it refers to the process that monolinguals go through to acquire their first language. This part aims to offer a brief and simplified explanation of how that process usually occurs. Naturally, if the focus was more on language development the insight given here would be more detailed as well but, in this setting, it is not necessary. Giving some insight into language acquisition is still reasonable as parents do pay attention to their children's language development, especially in the early years. Moreover, pre-conceptions related to bilingualism and language acquisition were visible in the data and will be discussed in the analysis too, which makes it necessary to know the basic stages and concepts behind language development.

We become familiar with sounds of languages around us already in the womb (Hassinen, 2005; De Houwer, 2009; O'Malley, 2021). In the news article published by RTÉ Dr. Mary-Pat O'Malley (2021) wrote how even newborn babies are seemingly able to recognise more than one languages spoken around them due to the exposure while in the womb. In her book Hassinen (2005) gives a clear and general introduction to young children's language acquisition when the children are not suffering from cognitive or physical impairments that might affect the language development. Hearing and listening to sounds are, as can be guessed, the first skills we learn and use to acquire a language. We learn to convey meaning into sounds and interpret their abstract and concrete meanings so automatically that Sharwood Smith (1991) argues it is impossible for us to stop it without consciously or physically blocking the stimulus, in this case

sound. This would be similar to our sight, once we learn to use the sense and convey meaning through it, it is impossible not to do so without closing our eyes (Sharwood Smith, 1991).

Approximately a five-month-old child will start to copy the syllables they hear in attempt to eventually produce words (Hassinen, 2005). The exact age and pace of these developments might vary based on the child's individual sensitivity to language and sounds, as well as cognitive abilities and whether they are first focused on motorical or linguistic skills (Hassinen, 2005; De Houwer, 2009). While Paradis (2007) argues that at early age bilinguals might reach certain language skills or patterns, such as ability to learn words for novel objects, later than their monolingual peers in the shared language, De Houwer (2009) and Grosjean (2010) have different views. According to them, bilinguals reach speech development patterns such as babbling at the same rate as their monolingual peers and differences are minor. The arguments that bilingualism would really delay language development or be harmful for child's future linguistic achievements is also challenged by the fact growing up the differences are even less visible and they might even do better with new abstract concepts (Paradis, 2007; Hassinen, 2005). Moreover Paradis (2007) herself notes that if bilinguals' total conceptual vocabulary across all their languages is taken into account they perform at the same level as monolinguals. Still standardised measures when comparing bilingual and monolingual children are missing (Paradis, 2007).

Eventually a child starts to put together sentences that slowly grow from two- and three-word sentences to longer ones (Hassinen, 2005). Hassinen's (2005) book puts these developmental stages to usually take place when a child is two, usually after they have reached the 50-word mark in their vocabulary size. Conjugation of words and grammar become more visible and varied at this stage as well (Hassinen, 2005). Multiple research point out the phenomenon where bilinguals' languages can influence the structures of each other's (Hassinen, 2005; Ewert, 2006; Tamburelli, 2006; Grosjean, 2010; Paradis, 2007). This can show up in conjugation, word order and way of expressing in general (Hassinen, 2005; Ewert, 2006; Tamburelli, 2006; Paradis, 2007), expressions as such might not be grammatically inaccurate but might differ from monolinguals' language use slightly as discussed in Ewert's research (2006). In his book Grosjean (2010) discusses how children, whether monolingual or bilingual, tend to over generalise some grammar structures of their languages before acquiring them and their irregularities fully. Bilinguals can also apply the structures that they have already internalised in one language to their other languages which rules they have not fully acquired yet (Grosjean, 2010). This phenomenon is also mentioned by Hassinen (2005). The reasons behind it are the child's inability to separate the languages in their own production or/and they have not learnt the equivalent in the

other language yet (Hassinen, 2005). The feature, however, tends to disappear once a child grows and internalises the languages more, usually by the age of four (Grosjean, 2010; Hassinen, 2005). This is called code mixing, it differentiates from code switching by being more unconscious act and it is concerning if it appears in all child's languages and does not disappear (Hassinen, 2005).

These cross-linguistic effects between bilinguals' languages, especially in early years use, are probably one reason why the structures of bilinguals' inner language systems are still being debated. Alongside with code-switching, which will be discussed more later on in the thesis. One of the debated differences between bilinguals' and monolinguals' language acquisition, is whether bilinguals develop two completely separate language systems, one single or so called "hybrid" system that is combination of the languages (Sharwood Smith, 1991; Tamburelli, 2006). Sharwood Smith (1991) does argue, however, that whatever knowledge level bilinguals process the language heard and needed to speak, they might hold superior metalinguistic skills to monolinguals. This is even if they might not be able to reach a perfect hold of some skills in one or all of their respective languages (Sharwood Smith, 1991). These notions again show that while simultaneously bilinguals' language acquisition follows similar paths as monolinguals (Sharwood Smith, 1991), it is hard to pinpoint how the processes differ.

Later on, we are taught to read and write in the language, or languages, if the language has a written format. With reading and writing we learn to connect sounds and constructs we know with letters that present those in printed form. Hassinen (2005) presents a view that acquiring a skill to read and write in another language can help to learn the same skills in another language later on, or even around the same time. This is a consequence of the fact that once a child learns to read in another language, they do not have to start from a scratch with another, assuming that the other language does not have a completely different letter or writing system (Hassinen, 2005). While writing and reading might not be essential and daily language skills that bilinguals need in all their languages they do ultimately support the language development and reading is seen as key to strong linguistic skills whether one speaks one or multiple languages (Hassinen, 2005). Which is why even monolingual parents are encouraged to read for their children and support their linguistic skills any way possible.

While bilinguals and monolinguals do share the basic elements of language acquisition phases there are differences in timings and patterns (Hassinen, 2005). As language acquisition is ultimately dependent on each individual and the setting where it takes place it is likely that there

is no simple answer on how bilinguals' language systems are constructed and how the acquisition really differs from monolinguals'. Our language skills also develop through-out our lifetime whether we operate through one or multiple languages. Continuous and rich language exposure, whether in one or multiple languages, is beneficial for all children's language development (Hassinen, 2005; De Houwer, 2009). This research will also see language as such, something that is constantly evolving to fit our needs and the acquisition of our languages being a lifelong process.

2.4.3 Bilingual Language

Evaluating competence is not an objective of this thesis but understanding the themes, that often surround bilinguals' language use and how they are linked with competence, support understanding the research and thoughts that come up in the analysis part. Monolinguals and bilinguals' competence and language use are often compared as there is an idea that monolinguals hold the perfect capacity and competence in their language, which comes from a rather eurocentric and monolinguistic culture (Auer & Wei, 2007). Features of language such as size of a vocabulary, use of code-switches and accent might be held as evidence of one's competence, or a lack of it. Each of these are present and vary between speakers, whether monolingual or bilingual, but with bilinguals there might be more misconceptions surrounding these features. A young child's code-switches or natural inability to produce "clean" monolingual speech can lead to concern over speech delays or language impairments. This chapter aims to briefly explain some of these phenomenons that are part of bilinguals' language use and how their use as evaluation of competence might be linked with certain understanding of language and bilingualism as whole.

Bilinguals' language competence is often looked through the lens of what we expect to be the language level of those considered monolingual native speakers of any language. The previous chapter presented how bilinguals tend to use their full linguistic capacity when it comes to grammar when still acquiring the language (Grosjean, 2010). The cross-linguistic effects might be visible even later in life with expressions and forms that are not necessarily incorrect just rarer with monolingual users, as Ewert's (2006) study showed. In second language teaching it is known that each student has their individual needs when learning the language and feeling that those needs are not met can lead to lack of motivation and satisfaction, whereas relevant topics can enhance outcomes (e.g. Tran, 2007; Bacha & Bahous, 2008). In my data it appeared

that similarly bilingual children might not see the appeal of studying one of their languages outside school hours as it was just more work and there was no evident need for such command of the language. Hold of grammar is one of the elements when evaluating proficiency in a language (Cambridge University Press, n.d.b; Cambridge University Press ELT, 2015), but it is reasonable to keep in mind that a person who does not study the language at school, and uses it mostly in informal situations, does not necessarily have a chance to develop error free production with conjugations or prepositions for example. As mentioned by Grosjean (2010) even monolingual speakers attend school for years to develop their skills from informal practical communication to more academic and "correct" language. Still bilinguals, as any language learner and user, will gain more competence from learning grammar and it will support the overall language development (Trinade, 2018).

Vocabulary is another competence measurement that is rather visible when we use any language. The type of vocabulary we use and the extent of it are often used to evaluate one's proficiency in a language (e.g., Council of Europe, n.d.; Lee, 2021). Rich vocabulary can be achieved by surrounding oneself with the language through consuming media, such as books and films, or social interactions that offer meaningful application of the language in diverse topics (Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 2009). However, even monolingual speakers might have so to say "gaps" in their vocabulary, we might be well aware of specific terms and how to use them when it comes to our hobbies or professions but lack vocabulary in another field. Similarly, bilinguals might be more accustomed to using another language when speaking about a specific topic, acting in a certain situation or talking with someone (Grosjean, 2010; Saunders, 1988). It is rather natural that the languages are not completely balanced and there are gaps in situations where bilingual does not usually use the language in question (Grosjean, 2010; Saunders, 1988).

Challenges with certain grammatical structures or lack of vocabulary can sometimes be resolved with code-switches. *Code-switching* can be determined as follows:

> Coats (2020) "Code-switching is the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent."
>
> Gumperz (1982) "Code-switching is 'the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems'" (p. 59)

Similar phenomenon appears with monolingual speakers as well then it is referred to as style-switching (Coats, 2020; Appel & Muysken, 1987). In monolingual switches tend to show in changing accents or dialects, going between formal and informal language or using a vocabulary for a specific field of study or interest. Where monolinguals stay inside the same language when doing switches bilinguals are able to do it between languages (Coats, 2020). While Weinreich (1968) saw that code-switches do not happen inside a sentence Poplack's (1980) research shows that to be untrue. Poplack (1980) also found that there were differences in how fluent and non-fluent bilinguals applied code-switching methods. Extent of code-switches can go from single words to sentences inside a discourse. They can be dependent on a place, person or topic (Coats, 2020; Grosjean, 2010).

With younger children, parents might confuse code-switching with code-mixing and fear it is a sign of delay or impairment in language development (Hassinen, 2005; De Houwer, 2009). The struggle is not surprising as it still debated on how early children are able to consciously apply code-switches in their speech, consciousness is the separating factor between the two phenomenons (Hassinen, 2005; Grosjean, 2010). However, neither as such are signs of issues with the language acquisition as such, seeing that tendency to language mixing disappears usually by the age of four (Hassinen, 2005) and intentional code-switching can start even earlier than that (Grosjean, 2010). Actual language delays and issues with bilinguals can be hard to determine (Hassinen, 2005). However, diagnosable language delays caused by physical or cognitive impairments, or neurodivergency, would often be visible in all languages whereas code-switches and code-mixing might be employed more with weaker languages (Döpke, 2006; De Houwer, 2009). Code-switches are also seen to follow boundaries of grammatical constructions, instead of being random, and to be a communicative strategy that establish one's linguistic identity (Coats, 2020; De Houwer, 2009; Appel & Muysken, 1987).

Code-switching can be a sign of imbalance between the languages but also a natural way for bilingual to express themselves, their identity and use their whole linguistic capacity to do so (Appel & Muysken, 1987; De Houwer, 2009). Just as style-switching for monolingual speakers. The fact that code-switches often occur more with the weaker language is not only connected with the competence but also with the need to communicate effectively and effortlessly (Grosjean, 2010; Coats, 2020). Based on Grosjean's (2010) writing the fact that heritage language parents face this more can be traced back to not only lack of competence in the heritage language but whether they allow code-switching**.** Heritage language parents are often bilinguals

themselves as well, thus they will more likely understand speech that uses code-switches effortlessly, making the bilingual communication fast and easy (De Houwer, 1999; Döpke, 1994). Both De Houwer (1999) and Döpke (1994) as well as Grosjean (2010) write how parents' choices on discourse patterns can affect how their children communicate and use the heritage language. Allowing code-switches and bilingual communication will encourage using them and applying the child's dominant language over the heritage language (Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 1999). Döpke (1994) explains that this is due to the child experiencing that they can use their stronger language with the heritage language parent, which is easier and faster, which leads to the child not seeing the point of using the heritage language. Grosjean (2010) presents children as pragmatic language users who prefer to use the language that leads to most efficient communication. For example, children are not as happy to accommodate a language practicing if there is a shared language for more effortless communication (Grosjean, 2010). Parents own choices and confidence in using their heritage language can have an effect on their child's discourse patterns (Döpke, 1994; Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 1999).

Especially, Döpke (1994) explains that once a parent constantly corrects or demands them to use heritage language and does not accept the community language or code-switches the child will change communication pattern. The child will feel that constant repetition is not fast and effortless and starts to feel that using the preferred language of the parent, even if one has to stop to look for words at times, is eventually simpler (Döpke, 1994). These thought are also present in De Houwer's (2009) book and according to her the practice does not differ much from repeating "Please", when teaching politeness (p.320). This does not mean that parents should not help their children to produce the heritage language, instead, they should be sensitive to recognise when the child does not simply know the word or structures and help them accordingly (Döpke, 1994). Grosjean (2010) supports this idea by mentioning that parents who allow less code-switching and use methods such as "minimal grasp" and "expressed guess", find their children using the preferred language with them more. De Houwer (1999) also writes that the parental choices in language usage present their own beliefs about how children acquire language and how much parents' actions own actions affect it. She, however, thought that during her own research it was not yet clear how much parental linguistic choices and strategies actually affected young children's language usage patterns. Still, based on Döpke's (1994) and Grosjean's (2010) writing it seems there is some effect at least when it comes to communication patterns between the child and parent. Grosjean (2010), however, notes that despite parents frowned upon code-switching it might not fully stop it. He writes that, just like monolingual

children, bilingual children tend to play with their languages and intentionally use wrong language just to amuse themselves.

The process of switching from bilingual communication to more monolingual one can be challenging, as well as changing the language totally. As mentioned earlier, code-switches can be tied to domains, such as place, topic and people, which can also affect the extent of vocabulary in certain topics (Grosjean, 2010; Saunders, 1988; Coats, 2020). Similarly, we link certain languages with certain people and using a different language to cover a topic or to speak to a person can feel awkward (Grosjean, 2010). Grosjean (2010) continues to explain why this is. According to him we tie certain communication patterns, and language, especially with certain people to make judgement on what type of language and methods to use to get communication flow smoothly. Intrusion of any kind can lead to feelings of frustration as it takes more effort to decide how to act and communicate (Grosjean, 2010). If a child has gotten used to communicating in certain way with someone, they might show reluctance to change it because the connection between person and language is so strong in their mind (Grosjean, 2010). Especially younger children might show reluctance to change language used in certain situation or with certain people due to the fact that they are expecting a specific language to be used with certain people (Grosjean, 2010). This sensitivity was visible in responses to this research as well.

Additionally, Grosjean (2010) and De Houwer (1999) both write how bilinguals have two communication ”modes”; monolingual and bilingual. In monolingual mode they keep to one language whereas in bilingual mode they apply their whole linguistic capacity (Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 1999). Code-switches tend to be part of the bilingual language mode (Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 1999). Just like the age of shifting from code-mixing to code-switching is fluid and it is impossible to determine the exact age for that to happen, it is debatable at what age children are able to switch between monolingual and bilingual mode of communication (Grosjean, 2010). Grosjean (2010) himself said that this might be even at quite early age as the child starts to recognise who understands which languages and is thus a contact for either monolingual or bilingual communication. Bilingual mode and utilisation of code-switches is a natural way of communicating for bilinguals and strategy to get things done (Grosjean, 2010; Coats, 2020), and people who share similar languages such as siblings are likely to use their whole linguistic repertoire when communicating. It can be seen as part of one’s linguistic identity as well as creative way of meaning making (Grosjean, 2010). This does not mean monolingual mode should be left unattained, however. Supporting the development of monolingual

communication patterns does not only train one to manage in an environment where not everyone speaks multiple languages, but it also develops individual's competence in each language (Grosjean, 2010). Döpke (1994) and De Houwer (1999) also present that heritage language parents are often the key providers of monolingual discourse in the language or the ones looking out for those discourses. Ultimately the parents' own attitudes and positive approach towards bilingualism and the languages involved in the process hold a great value for children to become early bilinguals, as well as consistency and dedication to the cause (De Houwer, 1999; Döpke, 1994).

The last aspect of bilingual language to present is accent. Accent is a visible part of our speech and it is even today used as a mean of defining one's competence in a language. The fact that it is still used as marker of language level by some and that it was mentioned in the data of this research, makes it sensible to note why accent might not be reliable way of determining either language level or bilingualism. For this part I will draw from my own experiences as an English as a second language (ESL) teacher and will use English as an example language due to my familiarity with it. Firstly, accent can mark our geographical or socio-economic background which can lead to prejudices and discrimination (Roessel, Schoel & Stahlberg, 2018). Secondly, sometimes it is assumed that true bilinguals, especially early bilinguals would not have an accent in either of their languages (Grosjean, 2010). More specifically, not having accent means not having a foreign accent, because for example English has multiple geographical variations spoken in England alone. The variety of accents presents a challenge when aiming for a native-like accent, which accent we are exactly aiming for? Is it the received pronunciation which is used maybe by 3% of British people (Robinson, 2019) or a heavy Belfast accent? While there are indeed standard pronunciation guides for American and British English I as an English teacher have never encountered an approach where the target it to get rid-off the "foreign" accent of pupils. Instead, when teaching phonology and pronunciation the aim is to achieve intelligible speech patterns and distinguish between similar sounds to avoid misunderstandings (Kouvdou & Tsagari, 2018). This is my personal experience from attending a CELT -course (Certificate for English Language Teaching) as well.

Second language learners, myself included, often tend to still feel embarrassed due to awareness of our foreign accent, which is due to the discrimination and misconceptions that are linked with "foreign" accents. Grosjean (2010) addresses this in his book by mentioning how foreign accents can be linked with incompetence in the language or laziness in learning it. An accent can even be seen as a marker of level of professionalism even if person was a specialist in a

topic (Grosjean, 2010). Grosjean (2010) continues to argue that while an accent can affect the way or proficiency in a language, and thus bilingualism, is judged a person with a heavy accent can be very competent and fluent in the language. Additionally, even early bilinguals can hold an accent in one or all of their languages (Grosjean, 2010). The idea that accents do not necessarily project true competence or age of acquisition, never mind bilingualism, is supported by what Sharwood Smith (1991) and Hassinen (2005) respectfully write about phonological systems. Sharwood Smith (1991) writes that even simultaneous bilinguals are found to have non-trivial crosslinguistic influence in their languages. These can be for example patterns of segmenting speech, a person has mastered one way of segmenting in one of their languages and sticks with that despite the fact tha it does not fully correlate with the other languages (Sharwood Smith, 1991). Learning a new system that differs from the dominant language can be difficult (Sharwood Smith). Hassinen (2005) and Watson (1991) write that when acquiring a language, the phonological patterns and sounds become focused on the target language approximately around six months. Before that we are assumably able to distinguish all possible sounds of any language (Hassinen, 2005). This means that after this stage it is, if not impossible, at least hard to learn to produce certain sounds despite being initially able to produce any kind of sounds (Hassinen, 2005). Drawing from these notions a bilingual who has internalised certain patterns in pronunciation and speech, that lead to an accent, from one of their languages might find it just as difficult to learn the differentiating patterns of their other language as a second language learner would. Bilinguals evidently also tend have a different level of input when it comes to heritage languages than monolingual of that same language (Döpke, 1994; Grosjean, 2010). Additionally, it can be that the parent passing on that language might have adapted an accent due to extensive use of another language which again alters the language the child is exposed to, accent wise (Grosjean, 2010).

While it is true that learning a language from a young age can lead to a less distinctive foreign accent, accents are ultimately tied to individual abilities to learn or unlearn an accent (Grosjean, 2010). Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) supports the idea that accents should not be held in too high regard when evaluating competence or bilingualism. In her book she presents a study where a group of people were taught to repeat a sentence following as native-like production as possible and then another group had to judge who were native speakers and who were not (Skutnabb-Kangas, 981). The study showed, that while the participants were unable to understand what they were saying they managed to produce speech that the test-group found hard to distinguish

whether the speaker was native or not (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Showing that native-like accent can be learnt even with otherwise limited competence. Davies (2003) also wrote how both native speakers and non-native speakers failed to recognise one another when proficiency level was high. Thus, second language speakers can indeed achieve a level of accent and proficiency that matches the idea of nativenes even if they are not always early or simultaneous bilinguals. Early exposure can be an advantage but ultimately accents come down to an individual's effort and abilities to produce certain types of speech (Grosjean, 2010). Combining the idea of today's ESL teaching not aiming to get rid-off a personal accent but rather for intelligibility, and the native-passing accent being achievable even with lower hold of the language, it is indeed questionable to determine either competence or bilingual identity based on a person's accent (Grosjean, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981; Kouvdou & Tsagari, 2018). Parents' hopes for "accent-free" speech through early exposure to languages are understandable considering the prejudices connected with "foreign" accents. However, understanding that accent is not necessarily a marker of competence and appears even with early bilinguals, might lead to more realistic and sensitive evaluation of one's competence. As a friend of mine once said "Why should you be ashamed of your accent it only shows where you come from?", a "foreign" accent can also be seen as a marker that you are able to speak more than one language.

As monolingual and native use of language are often used as standards of measuring one's language development and competence it is understandable why bilinguals and monolinguals' languages are often compared. Despite similar aspects of language acquisition, comparisons might not be fruitful, however. As this chapter, and the previous ones, have shown that bilinguals have their own individual way of using their languages that differs from monolinguals, and even between bilinguals. While a bilingual's competence in one language might not be enough to deal with every aspect of life at any given moment it does not mean that they are deprived from making meaning when their whole linguistic capacity is taken into consideration. These aspects in mind, it is stressed that while doing this research the lack of competence in some languages or use of bilingual communication patterns are not considered as signs of semilingualism or not being a "real" bilingual. Neither is it seen that age of acquisition or accent are proof of one's bilingualism or competence.

2.4.4 Is Bilingual also Bicultural?

We are often part of multiple different cultures and our identity also builds from multiple particles, such as sexuality, ethnicity, professional and socio-economic for example (Edwards, 2009). Whether we have lived in one or ten countries we can be seen as multicultural through different cultures we are involved with (Grosjean, 2010). Both identity and cultures we hold in ourselves are related to specific areas in life that Grosjean (2010) call majority and minority cultures. Language can be seen to tie in with major cultures as it is often connected with nationality and ethnicity (Grosjean, 2010; Gudykunst, 1988). As language can sometimes be strongly tied in with the cultural identity of a nation or an ethnic group it is sometimes assumed that bilinguals are automatically bicultural. The connection of bilingualism and biculturalism will be discussed here because the participants of the study seemed to connect them strongly as well. The wish for children to identify with Finnish culture and identity was one of the most often mentioned reasons to pass on the language. This chapter will explain some of those aspects that might be involved with such feelings and whether a bilingual person is always a bicultural one.

The relation between language and ethnic or cultural identity is more or less complex as becomes clear when reading Edwards' (2009) book on the topic, and even more complex when focusing on bilinguals. A similar take can be gathered from Grosjean's (2010) description of relation of bilingualism and biculturalism. It becomes evident that each cultural group and each individual holds the connection between cultural identity and language on different stages, and that for all bilingualism does not automatically interpret as biculturalism (Grosjean, 2010; Edwards, 2009). Muysken and Appel (1987) give an example of Marathi speakers in Tamil Nadu with whom the ethnic identity is rather built on caste system rather than language, and despite having a common language there is very little communication between different castes. The competence in a language does not define the level of cultural attachment either (Grosjean, 2010; Edwards, 2009). Many of those who hold a high level of proficiency in their second language can probably recognize this. While they might not fully identify as monoculturally they might not feel strong attachments or emotions towards the culture of the second language either. A person can easily use multiple languages in everyday life and still feel strongly part of one culture only (Grosjean, 2010). An immigrant who has assimilated into their new home country and culture might still feel a strong attachment to their heritage culture (Aalberse, Backus & Muysken, 2019). A second-generation immigrant might feel like they are more part

of their heritage culture than the one they are living in despite lacking proficient skills to speak the language (Aalberse, Backus & Muysken, 2019).

Higher competency in a heritage language has been still linked with more positive and stronger ethnic identity with the heritage culture (Kondo-Brown, 2006). Edwards (2009), however gives Ireland and Wales as examples where despite not necessarily speaking the ancestorial language of their country people have strong national identities. To those for whom language is a pillar of a culture, loss of an ancestorial or heritage language can obviously seem like a loss of culture and cultural identity (Edwards, 2009). Which might explain why some immigrant parents might feel like they have failed to pass on their culture if their children do not gain a certain, or any, competence in the language. Braun and Cline (2014) present that not being able to pass one's language forward and their children becoming stronger in the language of the community, might not only appear as not passing on their own language and culture but that the children will belong to a different culture than their parents. For those parents whose partners also speak a heritage language it can be easier to accept that the children feel more connected with the culture of the other parent as long as it is not the culture of the environment, as that culture might feel strange to them (Braun & Cline, 2014).

Just like languages of a bilingual might not be balanced the same goes with the cultures (Grosjean, 2010). Another culture might feel more important or the importance and ties to each can vary trough-out one's lifetime and more ties might be created (Grosjean, 2010). Romo and Kennedy (2013) agree that language alone does not connect one to a heritage culture and vice-versa, despite both do support the success of the other. In their research a parent had brought in a view that just like those who have grown up monolingual might not realise the heritage language exposure needs more attention when aiming for bilingualism, the same goes with culture. If one has grown up in a monocultural environment it might not be apparent that for a child growing up in another culture they need planned connections and teaching of the heritage culture, as it is not surrounding them as it is for monoculturals and monolinguals (Romo & Kennedy, 2013). Previously it was mentioned how situations that are meaningful for a child to use monolingual communication in the heritage language support the development of the language. A similar pattern of meaningful and positive encounters with the heritage culture applies when wishing a child to gain not only the language but also the cultural connection and identity behind it (Romo & Kennedy, 2013). According to Romo and Kennedy (2013) these can be anything from food, music to cultural events and interactions with others with the shared cultural background, or as simple as looking at where books, toys or clothes the child wears are from.

Close connections and profound relationships with grandparents are also helpful in the process of raising a bicultural child (Romo & Kennedy, 2013).

Evidently while language can and does transmit values and morals of culture, for example through how the language indicates hierarchy and politeness (Kondo-Brown, 2006), and some might feel a culture is impossible to pass on without the language (Velázquez, 2019), it is not self-evident for culture to pass on. For parents who want to pass on not only language but culture, it might be sensible to focus on other aspects as well: such as food, traditions and beliefs for example, to make the culture more accessible for their children. Sharing the heritage culture and paying attention to teaching it does not only support the development of biculturalism and strengthen the ties with the heritage culture but can also work as a platform for furtering the interest in the language. For those parents who are fearing their children might not connect with the heritage culture due to lack of language, realising that culture can be passed on through other aspects as well can be a comforting thought. Acknowledging that while language can be a pillar of culture for oneself might not mean it is such for one's children can also help seeing the other connections children have with their heritage culture and support those ties.

Methodology

3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

When planning my research, I knew from the beginning that I did not want to go on with proving or testing any theories nor produce statistics around experiences, which led me to form a qualitative research. This decision guided me to use approaches and methods that are often used in qualitative research, such as content analysis and inductive approach when coding the data (Cresswell, 2014). I also believe qualitative approach allowed to present and validate more experiences as they would not be left out due to not appearing enough/often in the data.

The worldview that the research seems to follow also supports the choice of qualitative methods and constructions. As the objective has been to seek understanding of bilingual upbringing and see what type of constructions might be behind individuals' experiences, the research falls under the constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), the inductive approach of the data is also common in constructivist worldview as is the idea that our individual history, cultural background and social interactions shape our interpretations of the world. This applies to both people we research and ourselves as researchers (Creswell, 2014). This worldview is also visible in how the data has been coded and handled as I tried to present the variety and complexity of the experiences and views rather than narrow them down, which is a trait of the constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2014). Constructivist worldview is often connected with qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research tends to follow inductive approach and the research group is chosen purposefully rather than selected randomly (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2015). The research plan usually forms as the research goes on and the final questions might be formulated after gathering the data (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2015). Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2015) also point out that qualitative research aims to describe the real life and handle the cases as unique ones. All these aspects are visible in my study and were part of the research process the research became to be qualitative instead of quantitative (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2015).

As mentioned already the method used to analyse the data ended up being a content analysis. While the initial thought was to do a phenomenographical research this was not the case, although, the topic could have been fitted into phenomenography as the objective was to research experiences and constructions related to a specific phenomenon (Huusko & Paloniemi, 2006). The reason why this research cannot be read as phenomenographic is that at the end it did not

follow all the steps and traditions of the approach (Huusko & Paloniemi, 2006). Additionally, while in similar research done by Palviainen and Bergroth (2018) the method used was discourse analysis, it was not suitable method for my purposes. In discourse analysis the goal is to look how meanings are created in the text while I have looked for the meanings in the text (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Thus, this research did not involve discourse analysis either. It is rather a conventional content analysis, which can be used when conducting a qualitative research of this type (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005) conventional content analysis is often used with a topic that is not widely researched. Bilingualism and even parents' perceptions have been researched before (Palviainen & Bergroth, 2018; Romo & Kennedy, 2013; Oh & Fuligni, 2009) but I still found this method most suited for my research topic. I have tried to follow inductive and data-driven approach in my method, as explained by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) and also by Lune (2013). Meaning I did not have pre-set theories in mind when immersing myself into the data. Naturally, a researcher is always approaching the data with the research questions in mind and looks it through their own experiences and interests, which I have surely done as well, as it is impossible to get outside one's own reality (Perttula, 1995). Approaching my data without any specific theory in mind and immersing into the data, to see what it gives me, would mean I have worked with bottom-up type of method when doing my analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This sort of inductive approach supports the constructivist view (Creswell, 2014), as discussed earlier, however, there might be traits of abductive method which shares similarities with both theory-based and data-driven methods (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

I believe the approaches chosen and methods used have allowed me to give as thorough and complex presentation of the data collected. Other methods might have given alternative ways of reaching just as satisfying analysis but for reasons connected to time and skill-based restrictions the decisions and steps taken for this research were reasonable and logical. The following chapters will give more specific explanations of the coding and data collection process.

3.2 Data Collection

The data for this research was collected through an online questionary that was shared on three Facebook groups. Using social media as a platform for collecting data was selected due to the fact that it would reach the target group easily, quickly and in larger numbers. Thus, allowing

possibility to gain multiple participants in short time. While qualitative study does not necessarily need a large number of participants to be relevant, the greater numbers could add to the diversity of experiences. The three groups were chosen based on the likelihood of them having user population that would be interested in taking part on such questionary and who would meet the criteria set: living abroad, raising their children bilingually, having Finnish as one of the languages involved. The groups the questionary was posted on were; Ulkosuomalaisten blogit, Finnish People Living Abroad – Ulkosuomalaiset – Suomalaiset Ulkomailla and Kaksikieliset lapset. The first group has almost five-thousand members, the second nearly 15 000 and the last three-thousand members. The chose platforms proved to be a good one as overall forty-five people submitted responses to the questionary.

The participants were introduced with two ways of submitting their responses. They could either fill in a word document and submit the filled form to researcher's email address, or they could fill in a Google forms document with the same set of questions. First there was only the word document option available but from the request of those interest to take part in the research, the Google forms option was added, which increased and speeded up the data collection. To see the original and translated versions of the questionary and guidelines given can be found from appendix. Participants were only given the Finnish version of the questionary, but they were allowed to answer either in Finnish or English. All the received responses were in Finnish. Submitting the form could be seen as consenting to the research (Tampere University, n.d. a)

The questions presented in the question form were open ended questions that suited for the purpose of this research and would let the participants write about their experiences without leading them to answer in certain way (Kalliomäki, 2012; Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2015). Open ended questions are often used in qualitative research as they allow people write, or talk if interviews, freely about their life and experiences and possibly bringing in views that researcher did not originally consider (Creswell, 2014; Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2015). The translated and original questions can be found from appendix. To avoid issues with data protection or making it complicated the participants were not asked any information that was not needed for the research (Tampere University, n.d. b). As the goal was not to compare experiences between sexes or socio-economic backgrounds, or even between generations, the sex, occupation or age of the participants were not asked. The children's ages were asked to get an understanding of the participants' current situation in life. Meaning if the children were still very young, the current descriptions of their language levels or the language use in the family might still be up to change in the future more than in those families where children were already

teenagers or grown-up. Current country and languages used were asked for the same reasons and to make it easier to understand the bilingual reality the participants were living in, and to draw some comparisons between the countries or explain the differences through them at times. Overall, the questionary was designed so that it would be easy for me to analyse and to make the data protection process easy. These decisions made have hopefully resulted in securing the participants' privacy as well as possible.

Before choosing to go with an online questionary I was considering selecting few participants and having an interview with them. However, I felt that picking up the participants might lead to a very selected group of individuals and leave unintentionally out lot of interesting and diverse perspectives and experiences. As the goal of the research was to collect and present how diverse approaches and experiences in bilingual families can be, I decided that a questionary that anyone who wanted could fill in was the best methods to collect data. This way the participation was also fully optional, and no-one would feel pressure to take part in it just because they were personally approached (Finnish National Board of Research Integrity Tenk, 2019). Moreover, they would also stay anonymous for me and any personal feelings of an individual participant would not affect the analysis. Eventually, I did decide to leave option open for further interviews or questions by letting participants fill in their contact information if they were ready and willing to participate in an interview or answer more questions. Due to the fact that at the end I got back almost fifty responses, it was eventually decided that further interviews and questions would not be necessary for this research. For data protection reasons the contact details given were deleted as soon as this decision was made (Tampere University, n.d. b).

Reliability of the data collection process will be discussed after the analysis part when evaluating the overall reliability of the research. At this point it can be said, however, that the data collection process was successful and provided the research with relatively large and fruitful data to analyse. This initially shows that the collection methods were appropriately chosen for the purpose of the research.

3.3 Participants

As said overall forty-five people submitted their responses to the questionary. Five were received via email and the other thirty-nine came through the Google forms. Out of these forty-five responses forty-three are used in this thesis. The two responses were left out of this research because one of them did not match the criteria and with the other one it was too ambiguous

whether the criteria was matched. In both cases it was clear that these participants were currently living in Finland and their responses reflected more on the experiences of bilingual upbringing in Finland. Currently living in Finland was not an eliminating factor as such but in these cases the content of the responses was too focused on experiences in Finland. The research does include experiences of those who were currently staying or living in Finland but whose responses included mainly experiences and feelings from the past years when they were still living abroad.

The initial idea was to only include those whose partners were not Finnish or Finnish speakers, but this criterion was dismissed after receiving the responses. Only five participants seemed to currently have a Finnish speaking partner but none of their responses differentiated enough from others to be excluded from the research. They also brought up special aspects that would not have been included otherwise but are likely faced by other bilingual families as well, and as the goal was to understand the complexity of bilingual families' experiences it was essential to include them. Some of the participants also seemed to have Finnish speaking ex-partners, who they had children with, which also was an interesting aspect to have included in the research.

Approximately half of the participants said they had three languages involved in their family lives. In families with three languages there were three types of settings

1. At home there were two languages spoken, out of those two one was the majority language of the surrounding community and in addition to the home languages there was language of schooling for the children.
2. At home there were two languages spoken, neither of them being the majority language of the society, thus society bringing in the third language.
3. At home there were three languages spoken, two that were parents' native languages and out of those two one was also society's language, in addition there was a third language that parents shared and was used for family communication.

Out of twenty-one respondents that said there were three languages in use, two were too ambiguous to make certain assumptions on how the languages were involved in the family life.

The second biggest group were those who had two languages involved in their family lives. Most of these families used two languages at home, second one being also the language of the society they lived in. As said, there were few participants who had a Finnish speaking partner,

in these cases there was one language spoken at home and another was brought in by the surrounding society. Both parents being Finnish speakers, however, did not always mean it was the only language spoken at home. Some parents had made a decision to speak another language to their children to advance their language skills in the language of schooling or for reasons connected with special needs of their children.

Those who reported having four languages involved in their lives mostly had three languages at home: both parents' heritage languages, a shared language between the parents, and then the language of schooling and society around them. In few cases both parents were bilinguals themselves and tried to accommodate all their languages. Additionally, there were cases where change of environments had brought in additional languages. These are very likely simplified versions of how languages were involved in participants' lives as the divisions might not always be clear and strict. Especially in the case where parents were bilinguals or there were more than two languages involved the variations in language use are surely more varied and diverse in practice than what is presented here.

At the time of the data collection participants were living in twenty-five different countries and over twenty different languages were spoken in the families. Most of the participants were living in Europe but there was representation from Africa, Asia, North and South America as well. Of individual countries Germany and the USA were listed most as the current country of residence, both being mentioned six times. With languages it was sometimes hard to define how many of them were actually used regularly by any of the family members, but twenty-two different languages were mentioned when asked which languages were spoken in the family. Seemingly some were only used or learnt at school, and it was not always clear how many of those listed as school languages, or having learnt as additional languages at school, we used outside school environment. Based on the latter responses roughly twenty different languages seemed to be such that the family kept them actively in their lives. Most spoken languages were English and German, English was mentioned in twenty-one responses and German in eleven. The amount of those who speak English might even be higher as it is taught as second language widely, however, it is likely that it was not always mentioned if it was not considered as a family language or spoken between family members. From the participants' quotes used as an examples, mentions of countries and languages have occasionally been removed or replaced to make sure they stay as anonymous as possible. In cases where of countries like Norway, the. U.S.,

German and Sweden that are known to have many Finnish migrants, or languages such as German, English and French, the mentions have been left in as it would be unlikely to recognise anyone through those languages or countries.

Participants' children's ages varied from less than a year old to over forty-year-olds. In seven families all children were already over eighteen, in six there were both under and over eighteen-year-olds, and in rest of the families all children were under eighteen. The variety in children's ages gave a good insight into how parents at different stages in life saw their families', and children's, bilingualism. There were sometimes bigger age gaps between children in the same family and they might had had different mother or father than their siblings. These factors were often visible in how languages and their usage had changed in the family as its construction had changed, and how siblings might have different linguistic environments when growing up.

Diverse backgrounds of the participants made the analysis proses very intriguing yet challenging at times. Reliability and effects of this diversity will be discussed more in the latter chapters of the thesis that deal with the reliability, future research and overall conclusions. The next chapter will explain how this rather large and fruitful data was ultimately coded for analysis.

3.4 Methods of Analysis

After familiarising with the data, it became evident that the clearest way to organise and present the findings was by the initial questions presented in the questionary. However, each question on their own would not have offered a fruitful entity which is why the first stage was to go through the data and group some of the questions and responses under the same theme and heading. The below figure shows the initial themes the questions were grouped into.

From the figure it is visible that some questions were wholesome enough to have their own theme and heading and only question that was not strictly joined under any theme was the question number ten. This was due to the fact that responses to that question were so varying among themselves that forming a clear coding and coherent analysis for them in that manner would have been difficult. Instead, the responses to question ten were used to support and add other themes as the answers often touched some theme in one way or another.

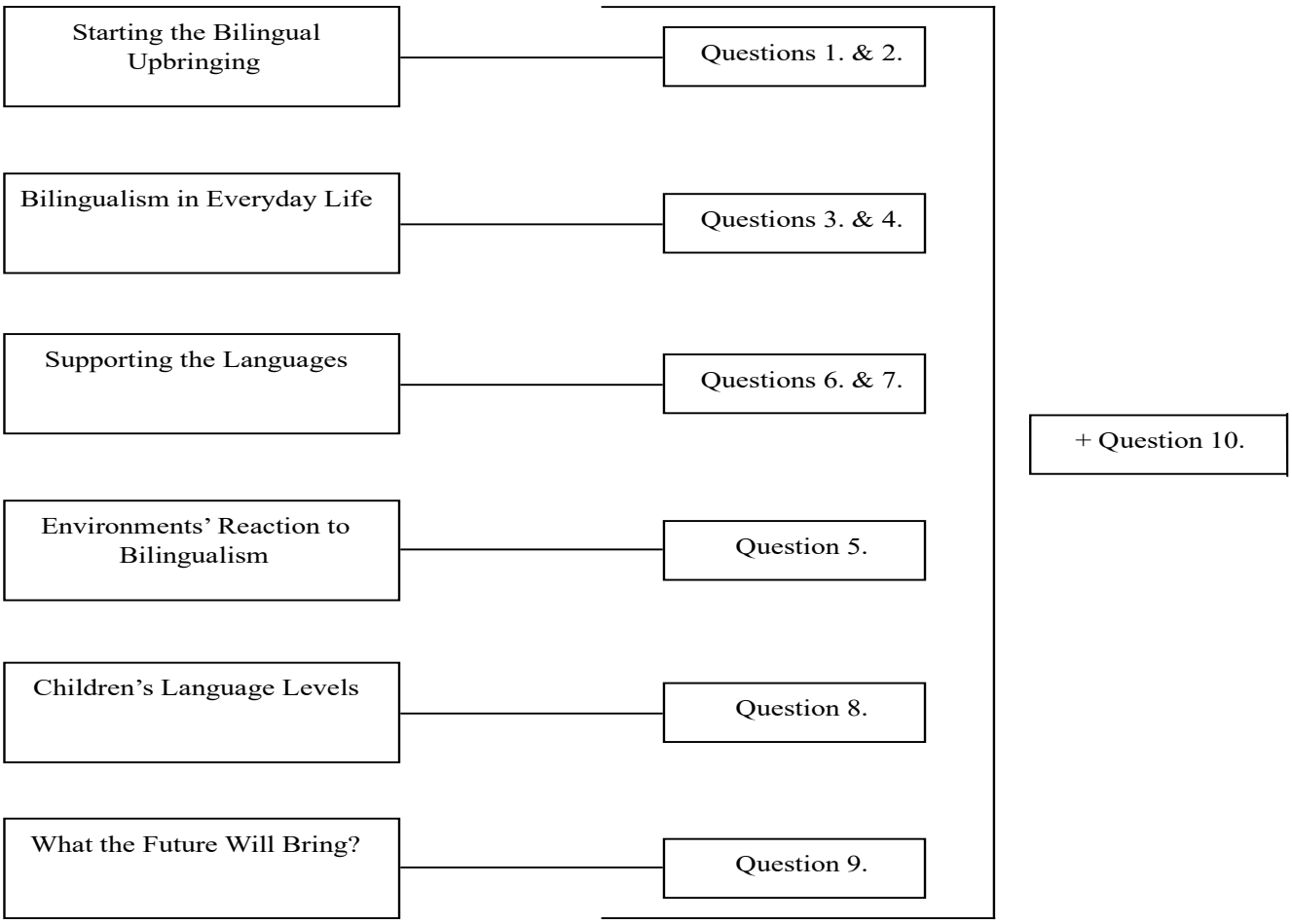

Figure 1.

Most themes followed the similar pattern of coding. First all responses to questions involved were read and grouped based on their similarities. Each experience that had not been present in the previous responses formed a new code and similar experiences were then added to that code's group. Once responses to the primary questions of a specific theme were coded the whole data was read through again to see if there was anything that connected with the topic. If for example there was a response to question number 10. that also touched upon environment theme, it was included in both sections. The codes found from the other parts of the data were coded similarly to those that responded the initial questions, meaning if they presented a new experience, they formed a new code group if not they were grouped with similar codes. Some responses have given multiple codes. This coding process can be seen from the figure below.

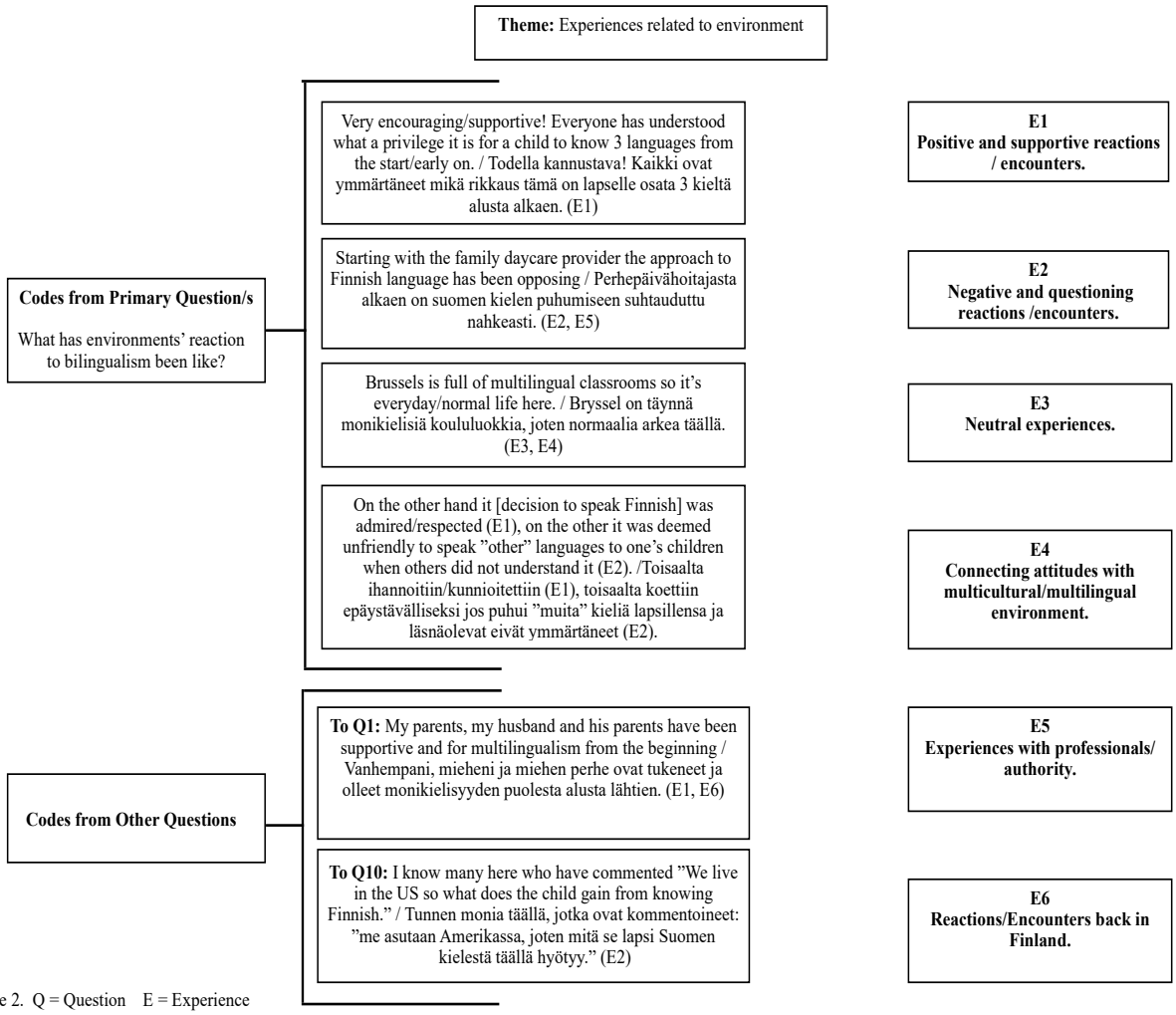

Figure 2. Q = Question E = Experience

Based on Tuomi and Sarajärvi's (2018) description of content analysis I believe the coding done here can be seen as follows. First, the data was reduced into themes (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Once forming the themes based on the data responses, or parts of them, were clustered to match each theme (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Parts clustered under themes could be words, sentences or paragraphs, as codes used in content analysis can be shorter or longer entities (Lune, 2013). Some codes were part of multiple clusters if they managed to match multiple themes. Finally, when all the responses clustered under the themes were coded into subcategories as explained by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018). In the case of my research these subcategories carry the name experiences, as shown in the earlier figure.

The coding was formed this way as it seemed like the best way to present all the hues that came up across the data. As Creswell (2014) wrote the aim of qualitative study, and especially one with the constructivist worldview, is to present the complexity and diversity of the human experience. With the coding system presented above this has been tried to achieve. However, the

same coding system did not work for all parts of the analysis which is why it was adapted for some parts. The two themes that were coded a little differently were: **bilingualism in everyday life** and **children's language levels**. The following subheadings will explain the coding of these two themes.

3.4.1 Coding for Bilingualism in Everyday Life

To cover how languages were divided in the participants' daily life this theme needed a slightly different approach than other themes. Namely the theme had a couple more steps during the coding process than the others. This was due to the assumption that families with more than two languages would naturally have to divide the time devoted to each language differently and each language would thus have different type of exposure in the family life (Braun & Cline, 2014). Adding the few steps into the coding process allowed to reveal the differences between the families but also the similarities.

To demonstrate what I mean by differences and similarities between the families with different number of languages I give the following examples: a family with three languages would naturally have one language more involved in their daily life than family with two, but at home both families might follow the OPOL method. The difference between them would thus be the number of languages involved and how for example language of schooling would be different but the share of languages at home would be similar. In comparison another family with three languages might have a heritage and a community language spoken by the parents but neither of those languages is shared between the parents so they use a third language to communicate with each other. The parents' shared language would often also be the language used when the whole family is together. Similarly, to a family with two languages the children in this type of family would be exposed to both community and heritage languages at home but then also to a third language. At home the method used would not be clear OPOL either as the children would use multiple languages with each parent in different situations. Overall, the exposure of each language at home would be different to those with two languages at home. These examples demonstrate how it was necessary to differentiate the responses according to number of languages, the reasons and ways the languages were involved in the family life, before looking into the strategies involved. These divisions helped not only recognise differences between the groups but also inside them.

In practice the coding started from grouping the participants based on the number of languages involved in their lives. Prior to this each participant was given a random number to keep track of who belonged to which group at each stage of the coding. These numbers were not properly applied when coding the other themes of this thesis despite occasional reflection was done between participants' answers to different questions. Once the participants were grouped according to the number of languages used, they were grouped according to how the languages were involved in their daily lives. For example, a family with four languages might have the languages involved through parents' own bilingualism, or they might use three languages at home: parents heritage languages and a shared language, and in addition to those three a separate community language. Families with three languages might have settings similar to examples presented earlier, in one they have two heritage languages at home and a community language, and in another they have a heritage language, a community language and a shared language of the parents. This grouping of the languages' involvement followed a similar pattern to other codings in a way that whenever a new type of structure appeared a new code for a group was created.

After these groupings the coding again followed more similar pattern to the other sections, whenever a new system of dividing the languages in the family came apparent it was seen as a starting code for a new group. Codes for language divisions were largely based on whether, and how, they followed the OPOL method. The families that clearly did not follow OPOL were such that parents seemingly used all the language with the children and the language choice was possibly based on domains such as place and topic. In these cases, each parent might have used more of their own language with the child than the other languages but not as clearly as in the OPOL. Another clearly not an OPOL method was when the language used by children at home and with the whole family was almost always the heritage language if the heritage language parent was present, even if the other parent could not speak it. This could be seen differing from OPOL in a way that often in OPOL the children would be expected to use each parent's language when responding to them and the parent using only their own language (Park, 2008), whereas in this setting the children might use the heritage language even when responding to the parent that does not speak it.

For those families that clearly used the OPOL method or a variation of it the divisions were as follows: a strict OPOL approach for those who always used their own language when communicating with their children even when others were present and expected to get response in that same language, a relaxed OPOL references to those who used another language in the

presence of other people but a heritage language when alone with their children. There was also a definition "practically OPOL" used to mark families where when alone with the children the parents used their own languages but then had a shared language when the whole family was together. The practically OPOL definition was also used in the instances where it was definite that the parents used OPOL, but the descriptions indicated such. It was unclear to what extent each family used translations to add understanding between family members, but it seemed that some of those with a stricter OPOL approach tended to try and get whole family conversations converted to each language. The figure drawn to demonstrate this coding system is a summarised version, meaning it might not hold all sub-categories involved.

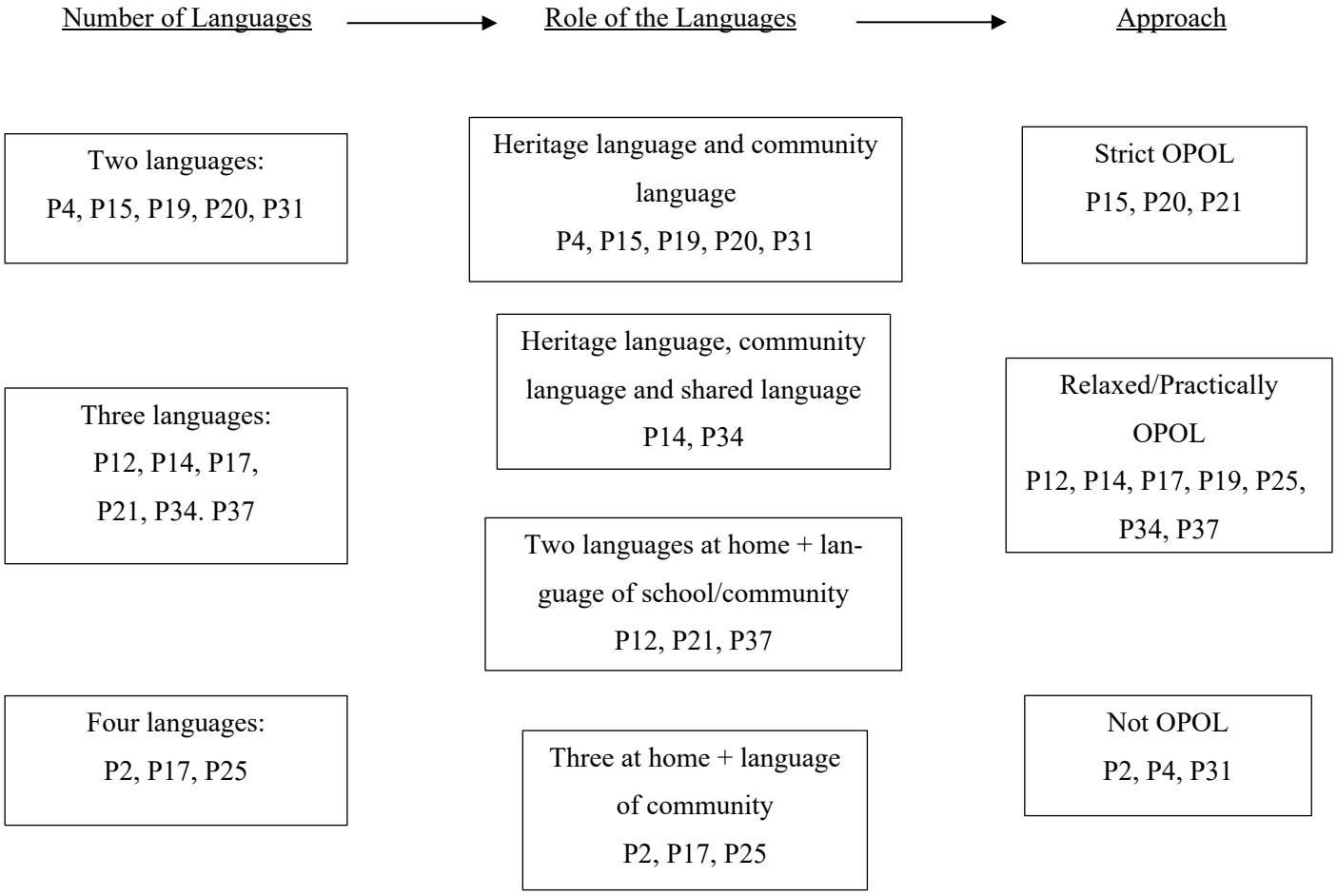

Figure 3. P= Participant

The above figure shows the coding process of this section. As the figure only uses some parts of the data to visualise the process, the overall division of what methods were mostly used for example in four lingual families is not visible here. To clarify that it is worth noting that often those with three languages went to practically OPOL category, as did those families with four languages. Very few overall, no matter how many languages were involved in the family, fell

under the clearly not OPOL category, five used the languages based on the situation and topic and in four families' children used one language at home whether it was understood by all or not. A strict OPOL approach was also followed only by four or five families, one was not definite, meaning many of those with two languages were using more relaxed approach that could be seen similar to those families with three languages that practically used OPOL.

The theme of everyday language use also included the changes that had occurred in the family lives. Here the responses were first coded according to whether approaches and aims had changed and after that those who had stated there had been changes were coded similarly to other parts. Meaning the reasons and types of changes formed a new code whenever the was an experience that different from the previous ones. The below figure gives again a summarised example of this.

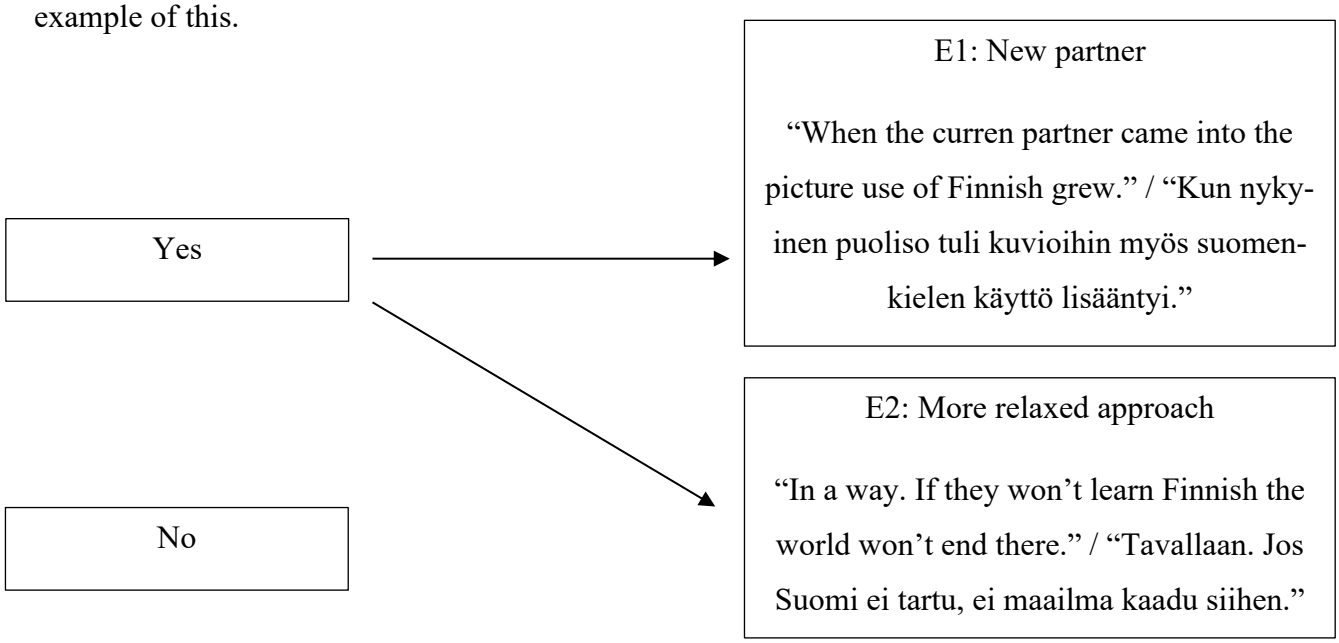

Figure 4. E = Experience

As explained earlier the coding for this section was different to make sure possible differences between families with different number of languages would be easier to spot. The coding also allowed to spot similarities. The added stages also aided to construct a clear and coherent description of the experiences and thoughts related to everyday language use. Even with the added stages the coding ultimately follows the pattern of basic content analysis where a theme was first created, the everyday language use, and then data was grouped and coded to form the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). It is possible that this theme could have been coded following the exact same pattern as the other themes, however, I see that adding some stages when

needed made the process more data based and inductive. The difference in coding this theme and the others might not be visible as such when writing out the analysis as it was initially done for me personally to make sense of the data and how to approach it the best.

3.4.2 Coding for Children's Language Levels

Another theme that needed a different approach for coding was the one where the participants described their children's language levels and how they felt about the language levels achieved. As participants were not given any pre-set scales or definitions for evaluating their children's language levels the descriptions varied a lot and it was not sensible to code the answers based on the words used. Especially when words like fluent and adequate might mean totally different things for different people. After trialling different ways to code the language levels it appeared that the best way to do so, was to form three ready set categories: positive descriptions, negative descriptions and neutral descriptions.

Coding the responses for this section according to the feeling they had was the clearest and simplest way to present the experiences. Coding based on language level would have been complex and insensitive as the words used varied and the families would any way have different aims. Ultimately, as the objective is to look into parents experiences it would have been unnecessary to even try and define the children's actual language levels.

In practice coding was done as follows. There were three "clouds" and from each response the part that helped to define whether the participants had negative, positive or neutral feelings towards the current situation, was placed inside the cloud. After each answer for the question related to language levels was coded the coding followed the similar pattern as the other parts; reading through all the answers and picking up codes that fitted into this theme as well.

The below figures are summarised versions of the original clouds. Only the cloud for negative expressions includes all the clearly negative experiences shown in the data. Additionally, it is worth noting that the line between positive and neutral expression was very hazy and some of the responses might have been suited for the other category as well. The summarised clouds only include the shorter extracts that could be picked from the data, often the explanations were longer.

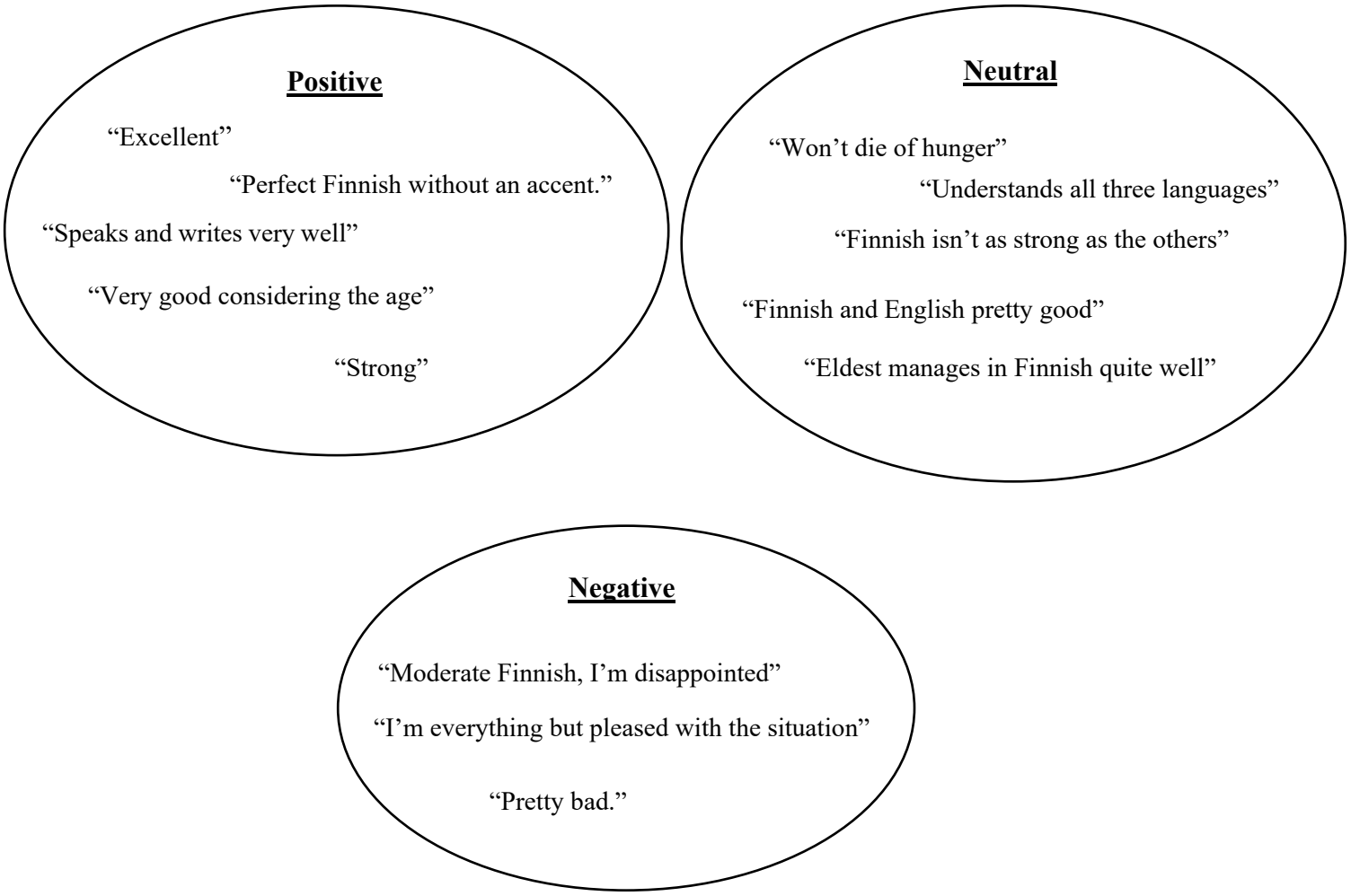

Figure 5.

In addition to how parents felt about the language levels this theme looked into what type of indicators were used to describe the language levels for example whether the data mentioned accent, vocabulary or other ways of determining the language level. This part, however, followed the similar coding as the other themes which was explained earlier.

The pre-set categories created, helped mainly to organise the data to see possible differences and similarities in the responses. While the clouds restricted creating various categories, they helped to see the bigger picture and underlying themes in the responses that varied in ways they described language levels. Different coding method for this part helped to imply inductive method and present the results the way that served the data best and let the variation in it show.

Results/Analysis

The experiences and thoughts of the participants were divided under six themes, which are handled under the following subheadings. Each subheading will focus to present and analyse experiences and thoughts presented for chosen themes. In addition, there will be reflection on whether these experiences share any similarities with previous studies and whether there is anything that connects them with certain perception related to bilingualism. The first subheading will deal with the theme of starting point, meaning it gives insight to reasons that lead parents to raise their children bilingually and what type of expectations they had prior to having children. The second theme will shed a light on how the languages are involved in families lives and how their approaches or thoughts might have altered since starting the process. After looking at the language divisions it is logical to move to presenting what methods the parents have found useful in everyday life and what not, before moving to experiences related to environments' reactions. Once presenting the different experiences and encounters with the environment the focus will be shifted into how the participants feel about and describe their children's language levels at the time of the research. The final theme presented at the results section will be future. Under this theme the focus will be on participants' expectations and thoughts on how bilingualism will look like in their family and in the world in the future. The results will be supported with quotations from the data showing both the original extract and the translated version.

4.1 Starting the Bilingual Upbringing

This first theme will present what kind of expectations and assumptions the participants had before starting the bilingual upbringing, what type of goals and setting they had and what were their initial reasons they had for bringing their children up bilingually. The theme ties in especially the responses for the first two questions of the questionairre but also responses from other questions fitted the theme at times.

The responses presented various expectations and preliminary thoughts in relations to bilingualism but most commonly the participants brought up the idea of the process being natural. Bilingualism being sort of self-evident choice was present in multiple responses to these questions. Some participants even stated that they did not feel like they had specifically started a bilingual upbringing as such but using multiple languages with the child had been a natural way of communication in the family from the beginning.

”I don’t feel that I have started any bilingual upbringing, but the child has been surrounded by the bilingual environment that they were born into” / “En koe aloittaneeni mitään monikielistä kasvatusta, vaan lasta on ympäröinyt alusta asti monikielinen todellisuus, johon hän on syntynyt.”

This approach was also reflected in the goals as some participants had not set any specific goals for the language acquisition. However, some did address that they had been warned about, and had expected, a challenging process, these were however fewer compared to the expectations of the process being simpler and natural. It was also apparent that some of them had expected the process to be easier than what it turned out to be.

” I thought it would be easier. My husband is German, and I assumed I’d naturally speak Finnish with our children.” / ”Luulin sen olevan helpompaa. Mieheni on saksalainen ja oletin puhuvani lastemme kanssa luonnollisesti suomea.”

”It was self-evident from the beginning that I would speak only my own language to my children and their father his language. Other options weren’t even considered at any stage.” / ”Itsestäänselvästi lähtökohtana se, että minä puhun lapsilleni ainoastaan omaa kieltäni ja lasten isä omaansa. Mitään muuta vaihtoehtoa ei edes mietitty missään vaiheessa.”

“I was advised to keep my expectations low and even a bit warned over succeeding in bilingualism. However, I myself believed this will work out.” / ”Minua neuvottiin pitämään odotukset matalina ja vähän peloteltiinkin monikielisyyden onnistumisesta. Uskoin kuitenkin itse, että tämä tulee onnistumaan.”

Assuming that language will be acquire naturally and similarly to monolinguals is not wrong, however, parents who have grown up monolingual might not realise that active bilingualism might actually need planning and likely involves at least unconscious decision making (De Houwer, 2009; Hassinen, 2005; Kennedy & Romo, 2014). When growing up in a monolingual family that speaks the language of the society one is automatically surrounded by the language in multiple ways and even then, it is important for a monolingual child to hear the language from different sources and being exposed to its different forms (De Houwer, 2009; Hassinen, 2005). This does not mean that acquiring the language in bilingual environment should be different or have more pedagogical approach, but actually it is indeed important that the child is presented as natural use of the language as possible and has a need for the language (Grosjean,

2010). Which makes the participants' idea of bilingualism being natural process an ideal approach. Where the problem might lie is the amount of exposure. If one grows up in a setting where one parent speaks the language of the society and the other a heritage language it is evident that the exposure for the heritage language is not as great as to the language of the society. Thus, if the parent with the heritage language does not pay attention to balancing the exposure of the languages, and the only and most often recurring exposure is that communication between the child and the parent, it can lead to less balanced bilingualism (Döpke, 1994; Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 2009). Saying this does not mean that the participants, who expressed the process being harder than they thought, would not have paid attention to the exposure of the language or been aware of its importance. Additionally, it is worth acknowledging that not everyone aims for balanced bilingualism and as we acquire language differently, some children might become more fluent in the language even with less exposure to it.

Those who had set up some kind of goals for their children's Finnish wrote mostly how they hoped for the children to have good level of Finnish. Words used when speaking about the linguistic goals often included communicative, good and fluent. One problem that rose here was the fact that the participants were not asked to determine what word such as fluent meant for them personally. This makes it hard to determine whether the goals were" high" or "low" so to say because fluency in a language means a different thing for different people. However, some participants did specify that their focus was on oral and listening skills for the language, answers stating that they wanted their children to be able to communicate with relatives and friends in Finland could be seen as similar implications to that.

"The goal was for children to speak Finnish fluently." / "Tavoitteena oli lasten sujuva suomenkielen puhuminen."

"The thought and assumption were that the children speak fluent Finnish, writing and reading felt less important." / "Ajatus ja oletus oli että lapset puhuvat sujuvasti suomea, kirjoittaminen ja lukeminen tuntui vähemmän tärkeältä"

Modern technology makes it easier and more affordable to communicate solely through spoken language, which can lead to fewer parents being concerned over written and reading skills. If the main wish is for children to be able to communicate with friends and relatives in Finland with little effort, then writing and reading might not seem that urgent skills to gain.

Despite most common goals having more focus on oral skills of the language there were also responses that indicated wish for good skills in written language. Some hopes for strong competence in Finnish, or in multiple languages, were connected with wish for better job prospects or possibility to move to and study in Finland in the future.

"I personally want that my children learn to read and write in Finnish…" / " Itse haluan, että lapset oppivat lukemaan ja kirjoittamaan suomeksi,…."

"Our goal is to take care together that Finland can be an option for studies, ***service,*** *work etc. if they choose so. We want that language or feeling outsider (in culture and language) will never be the reason why they couldn't end up having their own adventures in Finland"/ "Meidän tavoite on yhdessä pitää huoli, että Suomi olisi vaihtoehto lapsille opiskelun, varusmiespalvelun, työn tms. suhteen, jonka he valitsevat jos niin haluavat. Haluamme, että kieli tai ulkopuolisena olemisesta (kulttuurista ja kielestä) ei tulisi koskaan olemaan syy miksi he eivät päätyisi aikanaan omiin seikkailuihin Suomeen."*

Mentions of writing and reading might also be connected with wish to have strong comprehension of the language overall. From language learning point of view all four skills; speaking, listening, writing and reading, play important role in advancing one's overall comprehension in the language in question (Sadiku, 2015).

Balanced bilingualism was mentioned briefly earlier, and it was a clearly mentioned goal for some of the participants. Why this was their goal is not explained in their responses, however. The aim for balance might be connected with the idea that true bilingualism is connected with balanced and native-like control of a language as discussed in the methodology part. For those parents to whom language works as a marker of culture it might also mean that a child with balanced language skills has also balanced identity in their two cultures.

"The aim was that children would be able to express themselves as strongly in both of their languages." / "Tavoitteena oli että lapset olisivat yhtä vahvoja ilmaisuissaan molemmalla kielellään."

"The aim was that children would learn both languages and as same level as possible." / "Tavoitteena oli että lapset oppivat molemmat kielet ja mahdollisimman samalla tasolla."

Naturally, it is not possible to say that participants who wished to achieve balanced bilingualism with their children would define bilingualism based on balance and competence. But considering that it can still be a common assumption of bilinguals that they are balanced in their languages (Grosjean, 2010), it might have guided the goals. Additionally, if the family has been planning to live in Finland at some point or moves back and forth between Finland and some other countries balanced bilingualism might be the most convenient and realistic aim for them.

Few of the participants brought up that they had studied the topic themselves and some had grown up as bilinguals themselves. The ones who had grown up bilingual presented views similar to those who did not express similar background, meaning they saw bilingualism as a natural continuum in a family with multiple languages and had positive attitudes towards the process. Those, who clearly stated that they had previous knowledge of the phenomenon, either through their studies or reading they had done prior to having children, felt that they had quite realistic goals and assumptions of what the process would be like. This probably indicates that they had familiarised themselves with possible obstacles and challenges in bilingual language acquisition, and additionally with the ideal ways to achieve the goals they had set. Those familiar with the recent studies related to simultaneous early bilingualism might not be as concerned over code-switches or feel pressure to drop languages based on the views of those authorities that are not as read on the phenomenon. Knowledge of what kind of outcomes can be achieved with different resources might have also aided some participants to focus on skills and competence that would be most useful for their children.

"I have studied bilingualism myself and through that I had pretty grounded expectations and goals." / "Olen itse tutkinut kaksikielisyyttä ja sitä kautta aika jalat maassa olevat oletukset ja tavoitteet."

The second question presented to the participants that also connects with the background of their families' bilingual journey was what reasons they had for passing on the Finnish language to their children. Responses to these questions were mostly straight forward and followed similar patterns. Most of the participants simply stated that living outside Finland and having a partner who spoke another language had led to the decision of raising their children bilingual.

"I lived in Spain and now in Brazil and my partner is from Brazil, so we wanted that our child could communicate with both sides of the family." / "Asuin Espanjassa ja nyt Brasiliassa ja puolisoni on Brasiliasta, joten halusimme, että lapsemme voisi kommunikoida molempien perheiden kanssa."

In multiple answers Finnish language was also linked with identity, either the participants' own or their children. The language was seen as a key to the Finnish culture and having a bicultural identity. They also wanted their children to connect with the family and friends in Finland and saw that a shared language was either necessary for that or would help to build stronger bonds.

"I want my children to learn to speak my mother tongue and this way to learn also about Finnish culture, it's also their right as they are half Finnish after all." / "Haluan että lapseni oppivat puhumaan omaa äidinkieltäni ja täten myös oppivat suomalaisesta kulttuurista, se on myös oikeus heille, ovathan he puoliksi suomalaisia."

"Language is key to Finnish culture, to maintain family ties and I can express myself best in Finnish" / "Kieli on avain Suomen kulttuuriin, perhesuhteiden ylläpitämiseen ja osaan itse ilmaista itseäni parhaiten suomeksi."

"I wanted my child to be able to communicate with the Finnish relatives. For example, my mother does not speak English. I also wanted to give them a heritage through the language." / "Halusin lapseni pystyvän kommunikoimaan Suomen sukulaisten kanssa. Äitini esimerkiksi ei puhunut englantia. Halusin myös antaa heille perinnön kielen kautta."

In Kennedy and Romo's (2013) research it was noted as well that close ties with heritage language speaking family would indeed strengthen the need and will for children to use the language. Identity on the other hand can be more complex matter, as was explained in the theory, to become bicultural as well as bilingual the culture might need teaching (Romo & Kennedy, 2013). For bilingual and bicultural it can also be a journey to find balance, especially between the cultures (Grosjean, 2010). Still wishing to pass on culture trough language is a common idea with migrant parents and the two support each other (Romo & Kennedy, 2013; Velázquez, 2019).

While most of the participants had found the bilingual road natural and saw it as self-evident way of communicating in bilingual or migrant families this feeling was not shared by all. Some had found it hard to start speaking their heritage language to their children or keep talking in it when the surrounding community used another language. Döpke (1994) also noted in her study that some parents might find it hard to speak their heritage language when living in a new country and De Houwer (1999) and Grosjean (2010) have added that those with negative experiences with their heritage language might feel unconsciously reluctant to use the language.

Lack of partner's support or children's need to fit in the community might also influence the language usage (Grosjean, 2010). The process itself can also be harder than expected.

"It has been challenging to maintain Finnish language while living in France, especially as I'v always been alone and only one trying to speak it." / "Suomen kieli on ollut todella hankalaa pitää yllä Ranskassa asuessa, varsinkin kun olen aina ollut ainoa ja yksin joka yritti puhua."

"With the first-born children it was really hard to speak anything. It was so difficult to speak Finnish when environment's languge was German" / "Ensimmäisten lasten kanssa oli todella vaikea puhua mitään. Todella vaikeaa oli puhua suomea, kun ympäristön kieli on Saksa."

"Raising a bilingual child was much more work than I first though, and being consistent with speaking usually harder…" / "Monikielisen lapsen kasvattaminen oli paljon enemmän työtä kuin etukäteen ajattelin, ja johdonmukaisesti puhuminen usein paljon vaikeampaa…"

In the data it also became clear that while for some the process had been easy, they did recognise that they had an advantage of some sort or that not everyone with similar background pass on the heritage languages. This was often seen as a loss for the children but the participants who brought these issues up were also able to recognise the reasons behind the decisions.

"Our children don't have diagnosed learning disabilities, no dysfasia, dyslexia, or spatial learning disabilities……But I know families where children do have learning disabilities and don't learn languages the same way. I understand them even though it is not personally familiar to us." / "Lapsillamme ei ole diagnosoituja oppimisvaikeuksia, ei dysfasiaa, dysleksiaa, ei hahmottamishäiriöitä…Tiedän kuitenkin perheitä, joissa lapsilla on oppimisvaikeuksia, jolloin he eivät opi samalla tavoin kieliä. Ymmärrän heitä, vaikka tällainen ei ole meille omakohtaisesti tutu."

"In my job I meet children from immigran families. I can see that language upbringing I do is not common." / "Tapaan työssäni maahanmuuttajaperheiden lapsia. Näen, että oma kielikasvatukseni on epätavallista."

Despite possible future prospects and benefits being present in the responses as well it seems that the decisions and expectations were more based on emotions and practicality. This could differentiate bilingual upbringing happening at home from bilingualism that is sought through formal educational choices. It might also mark a difference between the social status as those with higher income and social status have different position to choose whether to bring up their

children bilingually or not. Overall, the participants' reasons and expectations followed similar patterns though the way they were expressed varied. Bilingualism was commonly seen as a positive possibility and an asset for their children, whether for economical or emotional reasons.

4.2 Bilingualism in Everyday Life

This section will present the experiences of participants in relation to use of multiple languages in their everyday life. This means showing how different languages are divided in their lives and how the use of languages, attitudes towards their use and changes in their use differentiate between the families. It is relevant to point out that each family makes choices based on their individual needs and priorities, meaning one model does not necessarily suit everyone nor is it better than another. Additionally, even if previous research or experiences give a different view in some matter it does not make any family's decision wrong as overall factors are never the exact same and experiences and needs are subjective.

As mentioned earlier when presenting the participants, there were often more than two languages involved in the families' lives. The number of languages in the family and their status in the surrounding society naturally affects the division of those languages in everyday life. Other factors influencing the use of the languages are the amount of communication with the families back in the country of origin as well as the amount of interaction with other Finnish people in the current location. All these factors were more or less present in the data collected for this research. As the everyday use of languages and settings influenced the possible changes in approaches the most, the possible changes in families' language policies are presented in this section as well.

Whether the families had two, three or four languages involved in their daily lives the divisions followed similar patterns. Most participants indicated that they followed the one parent one language -method (OPOL) in some way. Couple even clearly referred to this method later in their responses.

"Natural continuum, without much thinking we ended up using the OPOL method." / "Luonnollinen jatkumo, ilman suurta mietintää päädyimme käyttämään OPOL-metodia.

The first one was labelled as strict OPOL -method, meaning the participants either clearly stated that they very strictly and consistently spoke only Finnish for their children while their partner

spoke another language. Participants stating that they spoke Finnish to their children even when there were others present were considered having a stricter approach.

"Mom speaks only Finnish to the children, even when there are others who don't know Finnish." / "Äiti puhuu pelkkää suomea lapsille puhuttaessa, silloinkin kun ympärillä on muita jotka eivät osaa suomea."

The second approach was labelled technically OPOL or relaxed OPOL, meaning the participants clearly described a setting where both parents speak their own language with the children but might sometimes slip to speaking other's or society's language.

"I try to speak Finnish with the children when we are with our own family, English when others are around." / "Yritän keskustella lasten kanssa suomea kun olemme oman perheen kesken, englantia muiden kanssa."

The third OPOL category was one where the participants indicated that when alone with the children each spoke their own language but when together as a family or in certain situations, they spoke the shared language of the family or the society's language. In this third label there were naturally those who had stricter and more relaxed approach when separating the languages.

"I speak Finnish with the child, wife mainly English and occasionally Spanish. With the whole family shared language is English." / "Minä puhun lapsen kanssa suomea, vaimo pääasiassa englantia ja stunnaisesti espanjaa. Koko perheen yhteinen kieli on englanti."

While OPOL is well known strategy and it has been researched a lot Grosjean (2010) for example presented that it is not always the methods that gives the best "results", especially if there is nothing else supporting the language acquisition. However, only three had found OPOL as a not working method for their family despite it being used in many of the participants' homes. This shows that parents experiences might differ from research that only measure the competence achieved through a method.

In addition to those who clearly followed OPOL practices in their family lives there were participants whose answers did not give a clear indication of using OPOL. This means they might use different languages in different settings and situations without clear divisions, but it does not mean that they had not put effort or thought into exposing the children to each language.

"German is the main language, I speak way too little Finnish to the children, third language is the language of schooling." / "Saksa on pääkieli, Suomea puhun lapsille avian liian vähän ja tanska on koulukieli."

Additionally, there were few who seemed to have mostly one language spoken at home and another outside home environment. This was case either if the parents did not speak each other's first languages and their shared language had become the language used with the whole family. Settings where both parents were Finnish speakers but had ended up speaking another language to their children, while still communicating in Finnish with each other, were also present. Sometimes the home language was clearly set to support the heritage language even if the other parent did not really speak it.

"…communication with the whole family is through French which is my and my husband's shared language…" / "…perheen yhteinen kommunikointi sujuu ranskan kielellä joka on minun ja mieheni yhteinen kieli…"

"We parents speak Finnish together. Children's language is English."

"We decided to have Finnish as a home language whenever mom is home, even though the father was first bit sidelined from the conversations." / "Kotikieleksi otettiin Suomi aina silloin, kun äiti paikalla, vaikka isä oli aluksi pihalla siitä, missä keskustelu meni."

As the participants were in different points in their lives; their children being different ages, living in a different country than when having the children first and family structures changing, the methods presented above were either currently present in the family life or had been used when the children were younger, or the living was situation different. The participants were separately asked whether their approaches and attitudes had changed while bringing up their children, but changes in their approaches and reasons behind possible changes were visible in responses to other questions as well. So, if the participants had changed their OPOL, or other, approaches what were usually the reasons behind these decisions?

When asked whether their goals or reasons for bilingual upbringing had changed most participants simply said there had not been any changes. Still, even some of those who stated no added that they had maybe gained more confidence in their decision as the time had passed.

"No, same reasons and goals with language skills as they were when our first child was born." / "Ei, edelleen samat syyt ja tavoitteet kielen osaamisen tasoissa kuin esikoisen syntyessä."

”Goals haven’t but there are more reasons as one can express feelings and skills more creatively in with two languages.” / “Tavoitteet eivät, syitä on tullut ehkä lisää sillä kahdella kielellä omia tunteita ja taitoja voi ilmaista luovemmin.”

Out of those who clearly expressed that their goals and expectations had changed as the years went by, almost all said that their expectations had lowered, or they were not as demanding anymore. Some participants also brought up that once their children were older and had ”stable” skills in their heritage languages they had taken a looser approach to OPOL method they had been using. This was not necessarily mentioned when writing about possible changes in their expectations but inside responses to other questions.

“Reasons haven’t changed but I have become much merciful with the goals. Communication is the most important thing not what language it happens in and there are so many things in life that have become more valuable to me than the children having Finnish/Italian.” / “Syyt eivät ole muuttuneet mutta olen tullut tavoitteiden osalta hyvin paljon armollisemmaksi. Tärkeintä on kommunikointi, ei se millä kielellä kommunikoidaan ja elämässä on paljon sellaista mikä on noussut minulla arvona tärkeämmäksi kuin se, että lapset oppisivat vahvaa suomea/italiaa.”

“When the children grew, and I noticed they really had hold of the language [Finnish] *I did not stress so much about mixing the languages or anything like that. Slowly we started to use more Norwegian as the family language because the children left the father outside by speaking Finnish” / ”Kun lapset kasvoivat ja huomasin heidän todella hallitsevan kielen en enää hätäillyt kielten sekoittamisesta tai muusta sellaisesta. Vähitellen koko perheen kesken alettiin käyttää enemmän norjaa, koska lapset jättivät isän ulkopuolelle puhumalla suomea.”*

Children’s ageing was one of the reasons for changes in the communication patterns in the families. This either brought less balance with the languages, as the languages of school and environment became more present in the family life via children’s friends and homework. Also, the older children are more able to choose the media they consume better and change the languages of the programs which might make it harder for parents to add the heritage language exposure. Participants also mentioned that once children start to have their own friends and especially when the grown children get partners, it is harder to keep talking Finnish as it can make others feel excluded. Rodríquez’ (2013) study also shows how children growing and attending community language school can affect the languages used and consumed at home too. However, some participants with already adult children indicated that their language of communicating was still Finnish. So, children growing up was not always changing the language

patterns between the family members. This was usually visible in how those with adult children described their children's language skills.

"before attending kindergarten the children spoke Finnish fluenty but after that less so, they started having (german speaking) friends and when they grew up (school/hobbies) the community language started to be stronger because they spent less time home alone with me" / "ennenkuin lapset menivät päväkerhoon puhuivat suomea sujuvasti, siitä alkane vähemmän tuli (saksankielisiä) ystäviä, ja lasten kasvaessa (koulu/harrastukset) alkoi asuinmaan kieli olla suhteessa vahvempi koska lapset olivat vähemmän kotona yksin kanssani"

"The child (35-year-old) speaks and writes very good Finnish…" / "Lapsi (35 v.) puhuu ja kirjoittaa erittäin hyvää suomea…"

Another reason behind changing language policies, was the change of family construction and environment. Family construction changing often meant that the participants had separated from a previous partner and possibly gotten a new one later on. Both changes being enough to change the use and exposure of different languages on their own. Separation from a partner, especially in the cases where both parents were heritage language speakers, sometimes meant that the children had less time to be exposed to one of the languages as they saw the other parent less than before. It is good to also note that if the siblings had different parents, the language exposures and languages in general might have differed even inside one family.

"Soon in the new relationship I noticed that my partner for most parts was not able to understand anything I spoke with the children…it was natural to switch to English as family's shared language… " / "Huomasin pian, uuden parisuhteen myötä, että suurimman osan ajasta uusi avopuolisoni ei ymmärtänyt mitään mitä lasten kanssa keskustelin…..joten oli luontevaa ottaa englanti perheen yhteiseksi kieleksi…"

A new partner might sometimes have brought in yet another language to be used in the family, which occasionally lead to the original heritage languages of the family being spoken less than before and the shared language of the family members gaining more space. For example, if the family originally was using two heritage languages, say Finnish and Spanish when at home and the society around providing a third language, German for example, to use outside home environment. After parents' separation one of them was to get together with a French speaker who was not familiar with Finnish or Spanish but was with German. Prior to separation the balance between Finnish and Spanish at home might have been quite equal even if the parents had learnt

to understand each other's heritage languages so that there was not constant need for translating between the languages. German then having minority status at home and mainly used when visitors were present or when children were doing their homework. After the separation the setting might change so that children were less exposed to Spanish or Finnish, depending on how the children's time with each parent was divided, whereas German as a shared language between the members would have gained more exposure. Even if still following the OPOL - method there might be more need for translating from Spanish or Finnish into German after talking with the children to make sure that the new partner is included and aware of what is going on.

Grandparents passing away and other family members had also affected the exposure of families' heritage languages as there were less natural settings for communication in the language. It can be considered as change of family construction. This aspect was only mentioned once in the data, which might indicate that for all it had not had a bigger effect.

"The youngest doesn't have any contacts [in Finland] *because Finnish grandparents have died." / "Nuoremmalla ei ole kontakteja* [suomessa] *ollenkaan, koska suomalaiset kuolleet."*

Change of environment was also a reason behind some families' language policies changing. Change of environment here meaning the change of country of living. When combined with parents' possible separation, moving from one country to another, could affect the exposure of one language because contact time with that language might have decreased.

In situations, where there was no separation involved, the change of environment either brought in new languages into the families' life, decreased their amount, or exposure. If the family moved to a country where one of the heritage languages was the society's language as well, the change was often such that the previous language of schooling was dropped out or at least its exposure decreased. Where the language of the new country differed from both parents' heritage language, it sometimes meant that the children, and the family in general, were introduced to a new language of schooling and the previous one being more or less left out from the everyday life. This was more of the case with second languages learnt at school. As some families live a life where they change country regularly after a set number of years, the new environment did not always bring in proper changes in their language policies. This is because in such cases children were usually enrolled in schools that operate through a medium of English so even if the country's official language was a new one to the family, the division between families' main languages stayed the same.

"We lived all the time in countries with a third language [in addition to parents' languages], *first in English speaking countries and then in English speaking environments, and my partner and I speak English to each other, so it has always been part of our everyday." / "Asuimme koko ajan kolmannenkielisessä maassa, alkuun englanninkielisissä maissa ja sittemminkin englanninkielisessä elinympäristössä, ja puoliso ja mina puhumme englantia keskenämme eli englanti oli myös alusta asti vahvasti arjessa mukana."*

Above I have described how in general the families had divided the use of different languages in their everyday lives and what were the more commonly present factors behind changes that had occurred. In addition to what has now been presented, the following factors were also mentioned in couple of responses; children's neurodiversity diagnosis, diagnosed speech impairments, fear of possible speech delays and serious illnesses that the family had faced. As these factors can be highly sensitive and personal, for the family and the child, I decided not to include direct quotes for these to avoid recognition of any sort. All in all, this chapter has showed how diverse solutions can be between bilingual families and how the language policies live and adapt to suit each family and life events they go through. Even families with seemingly similar settings might end up with very different solutions when it comes to practicing everyday bilingualism. These solutions are very likely connected with each family's individual values and goals in relation to the phenomenon.

4.3 Supporting the Languages

This next chapter will present the participants' experiences on what has worked and has not worked for them in the context of supporting their children's bilingualism. Often these experiences lined up with notions done in the previous studies, highlighting the influence of active and meaningful interaction over passive exposure to the language. The participants found it easier to say what had worked rather than what had not, however, some did incline that bilingualism proved to be more challenging than they had expected.

While multiple responds showed that having clear structure in language use and being consistent with the policies had worked well, there were also notions how challenging it can be when no-one else around speaks the same language and when children use the other languages. It can be automatic reaction to answer back with the child's stronger language.

”Our children mainly respond in English even if we spoke in our mother tongues and often without noticing I respond then back in English too.” / “Lapset vastaavat meille pääasiassa englanniksi vaikka puhuisimme heille äidinkieliämme ja usein ihan huomaamatta tulee vastanneeksi itsekin englanniksi.

These experiences might be results from what Sharwood Smith (1991) explained about interpreting messages. According to him once we receive a message the process of decoding it is so automatic that we simply cannot ignore the message. Which is why a bilingual person, in this case the parents, decode the message they get from their children even if it is in a “wrong” language and possibly even answer it without thinking. Bilingual children then might use these situations for their advantage if they feel that they get the message through faster with their stronger language or by using code-switching that is part of their natural language use. For child it appears that if one language is easier for them, the heritage language parent understands that language, and it is used in the environment, there is no need to use it (Döpke, 1994).

Moving on, while some expressed how challenging it can be to stick to one’s heritage language it was also visible in the answers how some participants had noticed the value of being consistent and demanding in the use of the heritage language. Thus, having strict approach was presented as working method rather than a hindering one.

“Rather strict use of one parent-one language has worked well for us.” / Yksi vanhempi – yksi kieli aika tiukkapipoisesti toteutettuna on toiminut meillä hyvin.”

These experiences also follow the findings of previous research and theories, for example Grosjean (2010) writes how not accepting ”wrong” language from the child makes the communication in the stronger language more effort and eventually leads to using the wanted language. Naturally parents should be aware of their children’s language skills so that they know when the child might not know yet how to express certain topics in the wanted language and aid in the process when needed (Döpke, 1994). Still not everyone had found strict use of OPOL practical for their family as it left members outside conversations or they possibly felt it was rude when guests were around. Others just had more relaxed attitude and did not seem harm in their children’s code-switching.

“Strict one parent – one language didn’t work in daily family life.” / “Tiukka yksi vanhempi yksi kieli ei toiminut perhearjessa.”

"The children play with Finnish and mix the languages intentionally and creatively" / "Lapset leikittelevät suomella ja sekoittavat kieliä tarkoituksellisesti ja luovasti."

These experiences reflect not only how language divisions are different in the families but how their approaches in relation to bilingualism and communication in the family, and in general, differ. How they themselves perceive working communication, politeness or satisfying outcomes in language competence, probably link with the experience of what works and what does not. A person who does not approve or feel comfortable with any exclusion that can happen trough language choice probably does not find OPOL practical (Souza, 2015). Similarly, a person who wishes their children to use more monolingual mode when communicating might have stronger disagreement with allowing code-switches . Similar differences to use of OPOL was found with translations. Some had felt it was not beneficial when others systematically aimed to translate discussions to each language whenever possible. To me this might be linked with the aims, parents who wished for as balanced bilingualism as possible might have found it more useful to go discursions through all languages to support development of each language in different situations.

"Certain things such as setting boundaris, dealing with emotions etc. is done in both languages in that moment if possible (when both parents are there)" / "Tietyt asiat, esim. rajojen asettaminen, tunteiden käsittely yms. Tehdään molemmilla kielillä heti jos vain mahdollista (molemmat vanhemmat paikalla)."

"*Translating from one language to another* [did not work] or *changing the language or correcting sentences." / "Kääntäminen kieleltä toiselle,* [ei toiminut] *kieleten vaihtaminen tai lauseiden korjaaminen."*

The differences between experiences of whether OPOL or translations had worked are likely linked with what is natural communication in the family. It has been found that if one does not have a feeling that they really need to use the language and its use is not natural they are less likely to use it or at least aim for improving the level (Grosjean, 2010; De Houwer, 2009). This leads to the experiences that were related to using Finnish with relatives or those outside the instant family.

As in Kennedy and Romo's (2013) study it was clear with the data that grandparents among godparents with other friends and family who spoke Finnish were only making the language

use more engaging and interesting for the children. None of the responses gave away that interaction with other Finnish speakers would not have worked, despite they might not always mention calls or visits as such. Not mentioning communication with friends and family separately by all is likely linked with the fact that the parents simply did not see it as a tool or worth mentioning as it can be so natural to keep in contact. The change in technological advantages were mentioned by those with already grown children when noting that it was harder to keep in contact with Finnish family when living far away due to price and access to phone calls and such. But even before fast internet connections and cheaper international calls grandparents' support had meant a lot.

"Before you wouldn't eve have children's movies (let alone internet) to watch, because the video systems were different in the USA compared to Finland." / "Ennen ei ollut edes lasten elokuvia (saatika sitten nettiä) joita olisi voinut katsoa koska USAssa oli eri systeemi videolaitteilla kuin Suomessa."

"...Finnish granny sent tapes on which she had recorded herself reading bedtime stories." / "...mummi Suomesta lähetti kasetteja joille hän oli lukenut itasatuja."

Couple of the participants also mentioned that they had employed au-pairs and nannies who spoke Finnish, or other heritage language, which had been helpful.

"... when they were young we had Finnish speaking au-pairs so they also heard lot of Finnish spoken by others than me." / "...hänen varhaislapsuudessaan meillä oli suomenkielisiä aupaireja ja hän kuuli siis lapsena paljon suomen kieltä muiltakin kuin minulta."

As a former au-pair I can myself see how au-pairs add the exposure and need to speak Finnish for the children. From personal experience I can also say that for the au-pair it can also be easier to keep up the idea that monolingual communication through Finnish is easier as children might not get to see the au-pair interacting through the other languages as much. The illusion of speaking only Finnish might stay up longer and as Grosjean (2010) writes children less likely accommodate language learning situations for other so even if the au-pair speaks the other languages the children might prefer sticking to Finnish. The link created between language and certain people (Grosjean, 2010) can also play part here.

Meeting with other Finnish speakers thus seemed to be a working method for the parents and Döpke (1994) in her study supports the idea that heritage language parents try to seek out for

others who speak the language in their community. Still, not all instances of using Finnish outside home had been found practical or useful. Finnish clubs (suomikoulut) had similar contrasting experiences as OPOL and translating. Some mentioned that they were useful or would have been useful if accessible, when others did not share this thought.

"[When listing what had worked] *All those mentioned above, Finnish clubs and holidays…" /* "[Kun listattiin, mikä oli toiminut] *Kaikki yllämainitut, Suomikoulu sekä lomat…."*

"Local Finnish club [didn't work] *because the skills levels varied too much." / "Paikallinen Suomi-koulu, koska tasoerot olivat niin suuret."*

The latter quotation shares ideas with second language teaching in broader sense. In Finnish public schools the division between level of competence in foreign language teaching is not a common practice, but in other contexts it is. The notions that too formal teaching of the language at home did not work link with this theory as well.

"We tried to study language from school books, too boring…" / "Yritimme opiskella kieltä koulukirjoista, liian tylsää…"

Both, trying to accommodate different levels in the same group and teaching formal language, might affect the motivation as the language learnt and communications had, do not feel meaningful for the child. Different levels tie not only with the idea that children are pragmatic language users (Grosjean, 2010), but with the theory behind level grouping in second language teaching. Second language learners often need interaction with those with similar level of language not only to have meaningful conversations to practice the language, but to stay motivated to improve and not to lose interest due to insecurities that different levels in one group can raise (Gustiani, 2018; Elizondo, 2013). Based on my own experience finding materials that aid the learning, motivate the student and match their interest, is a hard one even for trained professionals. For those parents, who might not have previous knowledge of language teaching and learning outside their own experience, it can be even more challenging. In second language teaching it is also noted that the learners have different needs and focus when learning a language, meaning for one reading and writing can be the key skills to attain when another rarely uses them. With bilingual children this can be the case with reading and writing, especially in academic and formal context, if they do not see they need these skills it can affect their attitude towards the language in general.

Multiple participants wrote that they were unable to come up with methods that had not supported their family's bilingualism. However, some said that books and tv had not been as effective, probably compared to interacting with others, this is something that Grosjean (2010) mentions as well. Media, despite helping to add exposure of the language and gain vocabulary when other speakers are not available, is often quite passive method and to acquire productive language skills one needs more active use of the language in question (Grosjean, 2010). One participant presented this same idea in their response saying that with books and multimedia, parent needs to be present for them to be effective.

"One has to be present with the child, videos, movies etc. alone won't work. If one plays, crafts with the child and lets the child tell their own stuff, the language and relationship improve." Lapsen kanssa täytyy olla läsnä, videot, elokuvat tms. eivät yksin toimi. Jos lapsen kanssa leikkii, askartelee ja antaa lapsen kertoa omia juttujaan, kielitaito ja ihmissuhde kehittyvät."

This was visible also when analysing those responses that said that books and movies had been helpful tools in everyday life because there were multiple participants who felt this way. This can be explained with the fact that some of those parents still had relatively young children who were under school age and probably did not read themselves, thus parents more likely read for them and were present for interaction when watching tv shows and movies as well. Parents of older children also stated that reading together when children were small was important for the language maintenance.

"The number one has been reading stories since they were babies…" / "Aivan ykkönen on ollut satujen lukeminen vauvasta asti…."

"Reading, doing together, diverse discussions, video calls to Finland and other parent's home country." / "Lukeminen, yhdessä tekeminen, monipuolinen keskustelu, videopuhelut Suomeen ja toisen vanhemman kotimaahan."

The intake of the language and media in these types of examples, is thus not just passive exposure, but interactive and more meaningful experience for the child. Reading in general, whether the family is mono- or bilingual, is good for young children's language development and is seen as advantage in school age (Lukukeskus n.d a; Lukukeskus n.d. b). This was present in the data as well.

"Reading, reading and reading. Though, it's supposedly key to language comprehension for monolingual children too." / "Lukeminen, lukeminen ja lukeminen. Vaikka sehän taitaa olla kielitaidon ydin ihan yksikielisillekin lapsille."

Children's own reading was not listed as a method but when responding to language level question, some participants said their children can read and even enjoy reading comics and books in Finnish. For those who can read in the heritage language, and who do so, consuming written language probably support the overall language comprehension and gives autonomy over it, as it does for any language learner and user (van Staden, 2016; Gascoigne, 2008). Participants' positiveness over the reading habits can also be seen as reflection of that for them reading appears as supporting the language.

"But to my joy they read Finnish books rather fast too." / "Mutta ilokseni huomaan, että suomenkielisetkin kirjat luetaan nopsaan."

"They can read Finnish well and read approximately one novel per year in Finnish." / "He osaavat lukea suomea hyvin, lukevat noit yhden romaanin vuodessa suomeksi."

Another obstacle that can come across when applying books, movies, tv-shows and other media as tools for language exposure, is finding relevant and interesting material. This has however become easier thanks to internet and availability of different streaming services that allow one to choose the language of shows and movies. A participant with already grown-up children pointed this out as well by saying how it must be different now than before.

"For us it didn't work [maintaining Finnish] *but today internet and Finnish videos would be good for that" / "Meillä ei sujunut* [suomen ylläpito] *mutta nykyaikana netti sekä suomenkieliset videot olisivat hyviä."*

Still especially as children grow up the content available in Finnish, that is age appropriate and interesting, can be challenging to find. Though there is lot of tv-shows and movies available for younger children in Finnish, the fact is that content that would be created more for teenagers and young adults in Finnish is limited. From my own experience, youth series shown on Finnish channels are mostly international productions and daily shows like Uusi Päivä and Salatut elämät, which might offer some youth representation might not engage with teenagers who do not have experience of living in Finland. One participant revealed that they had found a solution by letting children watch shows such as Pasila or other that might not be ideal content vice but

the excitement of being allowed to watch more mature tv-shows made the children more engaged and enthusiastic.

“The most effective was Pasila DVDs which we let them watch without caring for the age markings. Watching ‘adults’ show was exciting…” / ”Tehokkain kielivirike oli Pasila-DVD, jonka katsominen sallittiin ikärajoista piittaamatta. ’Aikuisten’ ohjelman katsominen oli jännittävää…."

I think these responses show not only the challenges of using media to add language exposure but a gap in Finnish media production when young people are considered. The lack of shows for youth is interesting especially when shows like SKAM showed how popular Nordic youth series can become with considerably little budget (Gundersen, 2019). Shows like Hullu Hullumpi Yläaste and Sekasin might be filling in the gap though (Rytinki, 2021; Aromaa, 2018; Pajukallio, 2019). The gap in the media targeted for youth is also being filled in some ways by YouTube, which some participants mentioned in their responses.

“One can bring language to everyday life in many ways for example by following Finnish YouTubers…” / “Kieltä voi tuoda arkeen monin tavoin, esim. suomalaisten tubettajien seraaminen…”

Youtubers, vloggers and other influencers are current content creators globally and following their media can help to introduce a heritage language in a way that is relevant and interesting for children and suitable in content as well. Although, parents with less experience with Youtubers and content creators might not find these as accessible as those who possibly consume vlogs themselves. This is conclusion drawn from a notion made by a participant about how their own interest in children’s literature and academic background might have had an effect when applying different methods. If parents do not consume or see the value in current trends such as content creators, vlogs and podcasts, these might not transfer to their everyday life as well.

“It can be that academic background of us parents has had an impact so that we have been able to encourage our children to have positive approach to languages.” / “Voi olla, että meidän vanhempien akateeminen koulutustausta on vaikuttanut siihen, että olemme osanneet kannustaa lapsiamme positiivisesti kieliin.”

The experiences shown and discussed here mirror the idea that each family has their own needs and practices that work for them. The fact that many participants were unable to list methods that had not worked indicates that mostly they had been able to find the best solutions for their

aims and purposes. The responses also lined up mostly with the previous research and showed that the participants had good awareness of how to support language development of a child, whether monolingual or bilingual.

4.4 Environments' Reactions to Bilingualism

In the previous chapter participants' experiences in relation to environments' effects on their families' language policies and choices were presented. In this chapter the environment refers to the people the participants live and share their surroundings with. The goal of this chapter is to introduce the participants' experiences that relate to these people. How have the people they encounter in their country and in their family lives, reacted to their bilingualism? Have the participants encountered racism or negative attitudes for their language choices? Have their family and friends been supportive during the process? What kind of treatment have they come across when visiting Finland?

The responses showed that participants had gotten both negative and positive responses from their environment. No experience was exclusive to one country as participants living in the same country had sometimes different experiences and had faced different reactions. Each response is thus a subjective and individual experience of that specific country, and area, and the experience of one participant cannot be applied to the whole country. However, having only one representative from a country does not make their experiences any less relevant as they are simply presenting their subjective truth and lived experience which is valid in qualitative research as it adds to the variety presented (Creswell, 2014). This chapter will start with the supportive and positive reactions participants experienced from their partners and moving then to other family members, friends and lastly reactions of the environment more widely. The wider environment including teachers, doctors and how the construction of their social groups explains these experiences.

As discussed earlier, the participants' partners both current and past have affected the language policies inside the family. Sometimes, the case has been that the partner actively has for example been against speaking of the heritage language or expressed feelings of exclusion when it is being spoken. For example, De Houwer (1999) has noted that parents' attitudes towards bilingualism and each language, whether consciously shown or not, can have affect the bilingual upbringing. Which makes it important to note the other parents' attitudes as part of the experiences. In other cases, it might have been rather an inner feeling that the participants have had,

that the language spoken in a company should be one that everyone can understand it, if there is such language to exploit. This can apply both inside and outside the home environment. Some might see that using Finnish when around guests, friends or relatives that do not speak it is rude and excluding, but using the heritage language inside their instant family is acceptable even if their partner does not understand the language. Some might excuse the habit of speaking Finnish as rude, even when surrounded only by the instant family if their partner does not understand the language.

Those who expressed that they speak Finnish to their children even when their partner was present, and did not understand Finnish, often included a notion that reflected support given by their partner. Either neutral ”they are not bothered by it” type of notion or explaining that their partner positively supports their efforts to speak their heritage language. One participant even stated that their partner is very involved and interested in Finnish culture which made them very supportive with the linguistic aims and policies. Only two participants brought up that their partner did not like Finnish being spoken in their company. The reason behind reserved attitudes were not always explained, but one pointed out was the feeling of exclusion when the heritage language was being used.

”My husband is a proper fan of Finland and wants our children to actually become Finnish and not stereotypican Americans. My Husband supports the status of Finnish language and culture in our family briliantly.” / ”Mieheni on innokas Suomi-fani ja haluaa, että lapsista tulee oikeasti suomalaisia eikä mitään stereotyypillisiä amerikkalaisia. Mieheni tukee todella hienosti Suomen kielen ja kulttuurin sijaa perheessämme.”

”My husband didn’t want me to speak Finnish when he was around” / ” Mieheni ei halunnut että puhuin suomea hänen läsnäollessaan”

The above quotes present the two opposite sides of partners’ reaction to Finnish being used. It was evident that these attitudes had an effect on how confident the participants were with their own efforts.

If both parents were heritage language speakers or bilinguals the support was not necessarily as highlighted as in the cases where the other parent spoke the community language. However, some of the responses did show that in these cases the use of heritage languages even when the other parent was present, was most likely done in mutual understanding. Which showed a shared value in the manner that the bilingualism was practiced inside the family.

"We have set some rules for example if we are talking with the child about some ban set by the other parent the conversation is translated into English so that the other one can 'defend' themselves." / "Olemme sopineet joitakin pelisääntöjä, esim. jos lapsen kanssa keskustellaan toisen vanhemman asettamasta kiellosta, silloin käännetään keskustelua myös englanniksi, että toinen vanhempi voi 'puolustautua'."

The fact that both parents were heritage language speakers, did not always mean they shared approaches or views in relation to bilingualism. In some cases, the partners did not have a great desire to have their children speaking their heritage language and did not put in much effort in speaking it to them. In other cases, they might have had similar desires as the participants had for Finnish language, but they had more relaxed approach or lower expectations due to the status of the language or some of its features, such as the use of non-Latin letters. How participants themselves saw their partners' approaches varied as well. Some were openly sad and disappointed whereas others showed either neutral or understanding reactions to the matter.

"*It is frustrating that my husband does not try to speak his language* [to the child]*" / "Turhauttaa ettei mies oikein puhu kieltään* [lapselle]."

Overall, whether the participants' partners were heritage language speakers themselves or not, most of the responses reflected either supportive or neutral approach from partners. Partners' support probably partly explains why the positive experiences were more visible than the negative ones through-out the data.

Responses that set a light on other family members', such as grandparents, attitudes followed a similar pattern. The reactions had been either positive or neutral and rarely, it at all, negative as such. However, when talking about the reactions coming from grandparents there were more notions of them being worried than when talking about partners' attitudes. These reactions might be reflecting the differences between generations. Even if bilingual or immigrants themselves, the grandparents' views might have been affected by views that had relevance back when they were younger. The ideology that simultaneous bilingualism is not harmful or does not cause speech delays, is relatively recent one (De Houwer, 2009). Especially if a person has no personal experience of early bilingualism, it is not a surprise, that they might trust the outdated information coming from someone in the position of an authority. I personally have encountered people of my own age still believing that simultaneous bilinguals would have slower speech development compared to their monolingual peers, which shows how tight these beliefs can sit in our societies. While grandparents' reserved views might have been slightly more

present than partners' their numbers were still small. Most of the time the reactions were not exactly negative but carried worry over being excluded and more distant with the grandchildren due to the presence of the heritage language they did not share. Moreover, some grandparents did not see the point of children learning Finnish due to the small number of its speakers.

"My husband's mother was shocked. In her opinion nobody speaks Finnish so it is unnecessary." / "Mieheni äiti oli järkyttynyt asiasta. Hänen mielestään kukaan ei puhu Suomea eli sitä ei tarvitse."

"The American grandparents were panicing little at firts. They thought that because they couldn't communicate fluently with their first grandchild that they [the child] *wouldn't manage at school. They have calmed down along the way as I've given them some bilingual materials." / " Amerikkalaiset isovanhemmat olivat alussa vähän paniikissa. He olivat sitä mieltä, että koska he eivät mielestään pystyneet kommunikoimaan ensimmäisen lapsenlapsensa kanssa täysin sujuvasti englanniksi, niin hän tulee olemaan heikoilla koulussa. He ovat rauhoittuneet matkan varrella, kun olen laittanut heille kaksikielisyydestä materiaalia."*

"Guess the Norwegian grandparents estranded a little because the children spoke Finnish among themselves and with me" / " Norjalaiset isovanhemmat kai vähän vieraantuivat, koska lapset puhuivat keskenään ja minun kanssani vain suomea."

Negative experiences described seemed to rise mostly from encounters with authority practicians such as teachers and doctors. In general, the participants' responses did not present many negative experiences with the environments' reactions to bilingualism. However, some of those that could be clearly be labelled as negative and objective attitudes towards their language policies, were presented by professionals instead of the community as a whole. Some participants wrote how they had come across dentists and kindergarten teachers who had reacted negatively for parents using Finnish with their children. One participant even wrote how the pronunciation of child's name had been a conflict at a nurse's office. Another participant told that in their previous home country they had been told to concentrate to use only one language with the child.

"We lived in Estonia for a year and there we were pressured to use only one language with the child. As I had studied languages myself that this would not be right so eventually we said we are only going to use English even though in the reality the number of languages stayed the same." / " Asuimme reilun vuoden Virossa, jossa meidä painostettiin käyttämään lapsen kanssa

vain yhtä kieltä. Kieliä opiskelleena tiesin, että toimintatapa oli väärä, joten lopulta sanoimme käyttävämme vain englantia, vaika todellisuudessa kielien määrää ei vähennetty lainkaan."

"One dentist got a bit annoyed when I calmed my child down in Finnish." / "Yksi hammaslääkäri närkästyi kun rauhoittelin lasta suomeksi."

The participants did not open up further on whether the environment's reactions or attitudes had affected their approach on bilingualism or not. Despite not being asked about this specific aspect few did mention that they had not really given weight on the objective opinions of doctors or teachers. Moreover, it seemed that partners and relatives support, and attitudes had been weighted in more when making decisions in relation to language policies, which is only natural as they would be in more key position to provide support in everyday language use.

When writing about societies' negative reactions in wider scale the participants rarely connected it with the whole nation or area but rather saw them as individual's views. The participants' responses showed experiences of being yelled at in the streets for using Finnish, which was a mark of racist behaviour for them. Additionally, there were mentions of being looked at and others being annoyed at them for using a language that was not understood by all. Not speaking the majority language of the country was taken as rude or odd, and using another language in company of others was interpreted as in-polite. Negative attitudes were connected with general lack of knowledge of bilingualism.

"On the other hand, it was admired/respected, on the other it was seen unfriendly to speak 'other' languages for one's children if other's didn't understand." / "Toisaalta ihannoitiin/kunnioitettiin, toisaalta koettiin epäystävälliseksi jos puhui 'muita' kieliä lapsillensa ja läsnäolevat eivät ymmärtäneet."

"Usually, it's been ok. But we have met some rather racist people too. For example, saying things like 'Get the fuck out of this country." / "Normaalisti ok. Mutta ollaan myös tavattu aika rasistisia ihmisiä. Esim meille on sanottu. Get the fuck out of this country."

"Sometimes I've gotten some odd looks."

When comparing the experiences especially between developing countries and western world, it is good to remember how different approaches these two settings have for bilingualism. In many developing countries bilingualism is rather a must rather than a choice to achieve a better societal status and life, and not necessarily seen as a privilege. Whereas in the western countries

it can be seen as a choice and privilege one has. In western countries bilingualism can be a sign of status, either low or high depending on one's background. As has been noted before immigrant bilingualism might be seen as a threat and marker of low social status in some cases (Martin, 2018). Whereas being born to a bilingual family or gaining high competence through expat experience or education is considered as "better" bilingualism (Martin, 2018; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981). Good example of this is how participants, who lived in Sweden, had had very positive encounters and felt their environment supported their efforts for bilingualism, whereas a participant living in Africa described how the surrounding society valued English skills higher than the local language and teaching it or Finnish to the children was not seen as important.

"*Very supportive in Sweden." / "Ruotsissa todella kannustava."*

"Usually using Finnish is seen as odd and useless here [an African country]. People assume that the community language will be acquired on its own and it's not seen as important. English is overrated." / "Yleensä Suomen käyttämistä pidetään täällä [Afrikan maa] outona ja vähän turhana. Paikallisen kielen ajatellaan tulevan itsestään eikä sitäkään pidetä tärkeänä. Englantia yliarvostetaan."

Participants experiences in relation to environment's reactions to bilingualism also showed how subjective these experiences can be. One participant might tell how their bilingual approach was not supported by the medical professionals, other one is telling how they were praised to continue with their linguistic efforts or comments from teachers have rather been humorous notions than negative objections. Similarly, when the connotation about getting looks is slightly negative in some responses another might press how the attention and looks have never been negative. The following extracts from participants responses are examples of these positive encounters with their environment.

"Even at mother-baby clinic it was encouraged as learning strong home language would support learning Norwegian even if it wasn't spoken at home but learnt in nurseries and schools. The local Norwegians have positive attitude as well as long as people speak Norwegian too." / "Neuvolassakin kannustettiin että vahvan kotikielen osaaminen auttaa vahvan norjan oppimista, vaikka norjaa ei puhuttaisikaan kotona vaan se opitaan päiväkodissa ja koulussa. Kaupungin kantanorjalaisillakin on positiivinen asenne monikielisyyteen niin kauan kuin norjaakin osataan."

”Reactions have been admiring in both countries” / ”Reaktio on ollut ihaileva molemmissa maissa”

”At after school club the teachers told, positively amused, how they needed subtitles for the children when they spoke Finnish.” / “Iltapäiväkerhossa opettajat kertoivat positiivisen huvittuneina, että olisivat kaivanneet lapsiin tekstitystä, kun he puhuivat suomea.”

Experiences with Finnish people in Finland and abroad had similar pattern. Some were positive and other negative. The negative encounters were often to do with outsiders’ opinions on children’s language levels, as the participants wrote how Finnish people often expected higher competency in Finnish or did not understand how challenging bilingual upbringing can be.

”In Finland relatives frown at children’s partial skills in Finnish, which feels bad.” / “Suomessa sukulaiset paheksuvat lasten puuttellista suomenkielen taitoa, mikä tuntuu pahalta.”

”Many who I know here in the U.S. have commented ’We live in Ameica so what will the child gain from knowing Finnish here.’” / ”Tunnen monia täällä, jotka ovat kommentoineet:’me asutaan Amerikassa, joten mitä se lapsi Suomen kielestä täällä hyötyy.’”

”It feels that the idea of bilingualism is more normal. So, everyone has been positive about it yet they didn’t expect anything less from me.” / “Suomessa tuntuu, että ajatus kaksikielisyydestä on enemmän normaali. Joten kaikki olleet tosi positiivisia ja toisaalta eivät olettaneet mitään vähempää minut tuntien.”

”In Finland I was oftern praised for teaching Finnish to my children. Supportive!” / ”Suomessa sain usein kehuja siita etta olen opettanut lapsilleni suomea. Kannustavaa!”

Multiple participants also brought up a view in their responses that connected multicultural setting with acceptance, and support, for bilingualism.

“Our circles are rather multicultural so speaking more than one language in our community is more a norm than an exception.” / “Meidän elämänpiirimme on varsin monikulttuurinen eli useampi kieli on yhteisössämme enemmän normi kuin poikkeus.”

“It has taken lot of effort to get monolingual friends and family to understand our choice.” / “On ollut hurja työ saada yksikieliset ystävät ja sukulaiset ymmärtämään valintamme.”

The responses that high-lighted how monolinguals did not understand the aspects of bilingualism or its challenges, could also be interpreted supporting this perception, where multiculturalism and bilingualism of an individual or environment are seen as beneficial factors for understanding and aiming for bilingualism. But despite bilingual and multicultural environments being high-lighted as supportive ones some participants also noted that they might have felt pressure and failure more when bilingualism was expected from the family, but it had not turned out to be possible. In the responses participants also mentioned cases of other multicultural and lingual families who had not managed to teach their heritage language to their children despite the environment being supportive.

"It felt like it was expected that our children would speak both languages."

"Others seem to take it as self-evident that the children know or that they are taught multiple languages because we parents speak different languages…" / "Monet muut pitävät itsestäänselvyytenä että lapset osaavat tai heille opetetaan monte kieltä koska vanhemmat ovat erikielisiä…"

These notions support the fact that not everyone born to a bilingual environment or family automatically become bilingual, and that it is based on the parents' choices to some extent. It is worth noting that bilingualism of the country does not automatically lead to support for bilingualism as the language groups can be rather segregated for example Finland and Belgium are great examples of countries, where there are multiple official languages but the groups live rather separate and monolingual lives (Ahlholm, 2020; Appel & Muysken, 1987). Luxembourg then again can be great examples of a bilingual country where the diversity of languages and bilingualism is part of the culture (Souza, 2015). Additionally, expat communities might appear more accepting and open towards bilingualism and cultural variety than the overall culture as the background of the community members is already diverse and similar.

The experiences connected to environments showed again how subjective they can be. While most of them were positive or neutral at least, they also reflected how bilingualism can still be rather unfamiliar topic for some, or at least facts need to be updated. Auer and Wei have noted that especially in Europe where language and nation states are common the old beliefs in negative aspects of bilingualism still live more than in countries where it is almost mandatory. The participants' responses to this section also indicated that not all saw competence as the key value for bilingualism as they were upset when their children's language levels were criticised by those who were not familiar with bilingualism. The encounters also presented how even

bilingualism is often assumed to be automatic in certain context. However, it seemed like surrounding community's values rarely had as much effect and based on the overall data partners' attitudes had the biggest influence. Not changing their minds based on others' opinions also showed how well participants themselves had gotten informed about bilingualism and how much they believed in the process.

4.5 Children's Language Levels

As explained in the methodology section for this chapter the answers were divided into three "clouds"; positive, negative and neutral. This was due to the fact that the way participants described their children's language levels were varied. Some only gave one-word answers, where others wrote more specifically about different aspects of competence for example by separating productive and receptive skills or oral and written skills. Moreover, others might have only focused on Finnish skills while others gave notions regarding all the languages of the family. Which is why presenting these experiences and perceptions in this manner made the most sense and allowed more coherent presentation of these experiences.

It was clear that most of the participants described their children's language levels in positive or neutral manner, whereas clearly negative connotations were scarce. The fact that some of the expressions labelled here as neutral could as well been seen as positive ones and that some of the words, or similar words, used appear in multiple categories, shows how difficult it would have been to create strict categories. Strict categories might have been not only impossible to create but they might have been exclusive and insensitive. Language competence can be very personal and subjective experience which is why this way we are not labelling children's competence but presenting how the current situation is seen and experienced by the parents.

Responses showed that participants had good understanding of different aspects of language competence, and they had prioritised between them. As almost all participants lived abroad writing and reading, especially in academic context, were secondary skills compared to speaking and listening. Schools that offer Finnish, or other smaller heritage languages, as part of their curriculum might not always be available. This can often lead to un-balanced development of languages when it comes to more academic and field related vocabulary, such as biology or chemistry for example. Overall, this did not seem to worry the participants, only one expressed any type of worry over this.

”I see it as a problem that they won’t learn topics handled at school in Finnish so they do not know many concepts. In other words their everyday language is strong but at school in Finland they might struggle at first.” / ”Koen ongelmaksi sen, etteivät he opi koulussa opittuja sisältöjä suomeksi, jolloin he eivät tunne monia käsitteitä. Toisin sanoen heidän arkikielensä on suhteellisen hyvä, mutta koulussa voisi Suomessa tulla alussa ongelmia.”

Even when possible, lacks in language, such as inaccuracy on conjugation or grammar especially when writing, were mentioned they appeared as rather neutral notions. This shows that participants were aware and had accepted that these factors were not necessarily that essential for their children’s daily language use.

“Older one has good level [of Finnish] *and younger (luckily strong) Finnish, but conjugations is sometimes difficult.” / “Vanhemmalla hyvä ja nuoremmalla suomi (onneksi vahva) mutta taivuttaminen menee ajoittain hankalaksi.”*

Clearly negative experiences were in few, as mentioned before. Less than ten participants expressed disappointment with the outcomes or indicated their children had poor language skills when it came to Finnish. There was also one instance, where a participant described their children’s language skills similarly to those who clearly said their children knew very little in their heritage language, but which was ultimately labelled as neutral due to overall feeling of description.

”19-year-old manages in Finnish though, as I said, vocabulary is limited.” / “19-vuotias pärjää suomeksi, kuten sanoin, sanavarasto tosin heikko”

This shows how possibly lower language skills did not automatically link with negative feelings and experiences. It is also necessary to note that none of those responses labelled as negative gave any indication that the participants were unhappy with their children. The negative feelings are more likely connected with the process as a whole and prior expectations. In bilingual families the language exposure can rely a lot on one parent only, especially if they are the only one speaking that language in the surrounding environment (Döpke, 1994). This was addressed by one participant and some seemed to feel the lack of Finnish skills was their own failure.

”Finnish is not as strong as others. As only Finnish speaker in our circles it is challenging to maintain the language in everyday life” / ”Suomen kieli ei ole yhtä vahva kuin toiset. Ainoana suomalaisena meidän ympyröissä on hankalaa pitää lasten kielitaitoa yllä arjessa.”

”Pretty low. I’m myself disappointed that I din’t try enough.” / “Aika huono. Itse olen pettynyt kun en yrittänyt tarpeeksi.”

Feelings of disappointment might also be connected with a thought that the children with lower language level will not be gaining Finnish identity or access the culture properly, thus they might have a different national identity from their parents. In Braun’s (2014) book this is presented as well. Parents might find it hard to come in terms with the idea that their children will identify with another culture, especially if the parent does not connect with the culture or language in question strongly. One of the participants in the research had mentioned that for them the thought of their child feeling English, instead of Spanish or German as the parents were, was an uncomfortable one (Braun, 2014). In this research the participants did not present similar views but as has been mentioned earlier and will be discussed later they did connect culture, identity and language in multiple occasions. Which might explain some parents’ less positive feelings over their children’s language skills. For them it is not only sign of not being bilingual and achieving goals on that matter but possibly a marker for their children identifying with another culture more strongly. Braun (2014) connects this type of feelings and fears with especially monolingual parents.

Negative notions of children identifying with another culture were not present in the responses, but this aspect did get addressed. These were not negative or positive notions as such but rather neutral, simply stating what the children’s preferred language was or mentioning how they had accepted the fact that their children’s main language was something other than their heritage languages. These responses give the impression that the participants were in terms and probably had expected from the start that their children’s language and cultural identity would be different from their owns.

”I recognise the risk that English might ultimately be the children’s strongest language, that it is their language of emotions and language of play and first language; that they dream in English and write diaries and poems in English. It’s quite ok now, the main thing is that they do well in school and seem balanced and happy.” / ”Tunnistan riskin, että lasten vahvin kieli saattaa olla lopulta englanti; että se on heidän tunnekielensä ja leikkikielensä ja ensimmäinen kielensä; että ne näkevät unia englanniksi ja kirjoittavat päiväkirjaa ja runoja englanniksi. Se on nyt ihan ok, pääasia, että koulu menee hyvin ja vaikuttavat tasapainoisilta ja onnellisilta.”

”Our children’s first language is English which each of them has excellent hold of, it’s practically their mother tongue.” / “Lastemme vahvin kieli on englanti jota kukin osaa erinomaisesti, se on käytännössä heidän äidinkielensä. ”

The theme of language levels evidently included the most notions related to comprehension that have been part of determining bilinguals’ language competence, or level of bilingualism even. Three that were referred more than once were code-switching, accent and comparison to native speakers. In participants responses code-switching often took the form mixing languages, which might indicate unfamiliarity of the term. The complexity behind code-switches, and how similar they are to monolinguals’ style-switches, were also addressed in the methodology part of this thesis. In the responses code-switches were addressed only couple of times. In most cases they seemed to appear as a natural way of communication to the participants as they either said they started to allow them more once the children's language levels were stable or noted them as creative way of their children using their languages. The parents also mostly saw their own agency in the use of code-switches as they said the fact, they did not always demand their heritage language affected the communication patterns between their family members. One participant also noted, most likely with a humour involved, how it is not beneficial to let children to know that they speak the community language.

“Speaks with mixes but also understands the differences between languages, speaks one language to dad and more Finnish to mom though mixes dad’s language with it.” / “Puhuu sekoittaen mutta ymmärtää myös kielien eron ja puhuu isälle yhtä kieltä ja äidille enemmän suomea, mutta sekoittaa isän kieltä joukkoon.”

”Mom should not let the child know that she understands the community language too.” / “Äiti ei oikeasti saisi antaa lapsen tietää että myös ympäristön kieli sujuu.”

Only once code-switching might have affected the way languages were used in the family in question and had caused worry in the parents. The mixing, as it was referred in this case, had made parents worried that the child did not have hold of any of their languages properly before school and lead to decreasing the amount of the languages. While in this case the child was relatively young it had been noted that children might learn to code-switch relatively young and know with whom and when they can use monolingual or bilingual communication (Grosjean, 2010). As both parents in this case seemed to have hold of multiple languages involved in the family life, the child might have used code-switching rather than had issues with language development. Hassinen (2005) also wrote that unintentional code-mixes tend to disappear by the

age of four. The presence and different views, and even worries, connected with codes-switches might be rooted to internalised ideas of purity of the language discussed in theoretical part of the thesis. While this was the only case where code-mixes and -switches had guided parents' decisions and made them unsecure about the language acquisition, possible expectations for children to mix languages were present in couple of more responses. But even in one of them and in another comment, parents admired how early children were able to separate the languages to certain extent.

"I was very pleased about two things: the children have always kept the languages separate and that they communicate together in Finnish." / "Erityisesti olen ilahtunut kahdesta seikasta: lapset ovat aina pitäneet kielet erillään, ja että nyt on lapsilla keskenäänkin puhekielenä Suomi."

"The baby doesn't speak yet of-course but they do differentiate the languages (for example lookas at me weardly if I speak the community language)" / "Vauva ei tietenkään puhu vielä, erottaa kielet kylläkin (esim. katsoo minua kummasti, jos puhun yhteisön kieltä)."

Presence or absence of an accent when speaking any of the languages involved was usually either positive; the influence of another language had disappeared from the accent which was seen as positive development, the accent was native like and considered beautiful and correct by the parents. Alternatively, the notions were neutral; there might have been an accent different from what is considered native-like, but it did not bother the parents or there was no influence of other languages in the accents. The presence of accent is interesting as it was often tied in with the overall competence description, however, for example Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) and Grosjean (2010) both write how onc can learn an accent without actually learning the language. Meaning, it is not necessarily a marker of a competence or age of acquisition as discussed in the theory part. The amount and variety of native accents in many languages can also be seen as a marker to support this view.

"Fluent speaker, no foreign accent, only small mistakes." / "Sujuva puhetaito, ei vierasta aksenttia, vain pieniä virheitä."

"Producing speech in parents' languages harder and with very strong accent. (Which doesn't bother, however)" / "Puheen tuottaminen vanhempien kielellä vaikeampaa ja erittäin vahvalla aksentilla. (Ei tosin haittaa)

The presence of accent in the responses is probably tied to the comparison between native monolingual speakers of a language. These comparisons were only a few but still present in the responses. Usually, they were probably mentioned to aid getting an image of current language level of the children, but the comparison was also made to point out how the vocabulary in certain areas was not the same as for monolinguals of the specific language. In most cases this did not seem to be worrying the participants but there were indications that not all were happy with the situation. Usually, the wording in these comparison was that the children were on the same level as their peers.

"Same level as their age group, there hasn't been any delaying effects." / "Normaalin ikäisensä tasolla, ei siis ole ollut viivästävää vaikutusta."

The need to compare bilinguals' languages with monolingual' might root back to the old way of determining bilinguals which has been presented previously in this thesis. Saunders' (1988) and Grosjean (2010) have both argued against comparing bilinguals' and monolinguals' hold of shared language especially with vocabulary as they have different needs for each language. Similarly, De Houwer (2009) argues against comparing bilinguals and monolinguals' competences to each other's. The participants' responses thus do not necessarily show link between how they themselves determine bilingualism but how the comparison of the two very different language systems is still present when talking about bilinguals' language levels.

In few responses it was clearer that there might have been involvement of confirmed speech or language delays. In none of these instances were code-switches or involvement of multiple languages seen as the cause, although, in one case the diagnosis had led to altering choices in language use. Growing up simultaneously bilingual, or even sequentially, is rarely a cause of speech or language impairments or delays either, or can the issues necessarily be fixed by dropping languages (Döpke, 2006; De Houwer, 2009). However, involvement or dropping of a language does not mean the choice is ever easy one in any situation nor that language, or bilingualism, would not matter to the parents. Rather it should be seen as valuing other aspects in the family life more or that the choice simply being the best for family's general well-being in that situation. Again, I will refrain from quoting those who mentioned diagnosed issues with speech development due to sensitivity of the topic and to avoid participants being recognised.

Comparisons to native speakers of the same age, accent and code-switches all appeared in the data. However, none of these elements were mentioned as clearly negative traits nor does their mentioning mean that the participants would see their children less bilingual or less competent

in their languages. Rather it shows how deeply rooted they are in how we define language competence in general or see bilingualism. At the end only in couple responses, competence seemed to have possibly more hold of how some defined bilingualism.

"I believe my children will achieve real bilingualism (or actually trilingualism)" / "Uskon lasteni saavuttavan oikean kaksikielisyyden (tai oikeastaan kolmikielisyyden)

"In our family we have rather high standards for defining language competency, if one speaks only a little and with breaks, that is not counted as having hold of the language. For us, one is fluent only when they can speak with a flow, understand everything and only make individual grammar mistakes. If one manages in stores and can somehow hold a conversation they are at learning stage for us." / "Meillä perheessämme on aika korkeat vaatimukset kielitaidosta, eli jos puhuu vaan vähän ja tökkien, kyseistä kieltä ei lasketa kielitaidoksi. Sujuva on meille vasta kun puhuu sujuvasti keskustellen, ymmärtää kaiken ja tekee vain yksittäisiä kielioppivirheitä. Jos puhuu auttavasti, selviää kaupoissa, voi keskustella jokseenkin jonkun kanssa, niin meille se on vasta opettelemisvaihe"

As the participants were not asked to actually determine what bilingualism means to them it is still impossible to say that even with these notions the participants would have determined bilingualism solely based on one's competence. But these above examples do show that some do place more value on competence and have higher expectations when determining when one speaks another language.

To conclude this part, it should be mentioned that most of the participants did not address the question whether or not they were pleased with the outcomes. As the participants' descriptions of their children's language levels were mainly neutral or positive it can be assumed that they were happy with the current situation. When talking about language levels it is good to note that competence in language can be fluid and change through-out one's lifetime. Especially with younger children the balance and preference between languages can shift once they enter school and parents cannot have as much control over the language of media they consume. Moreover, while parents of older children might feel that the current language level is going to be the one of the future's there is no saying the children will not pick up with the language more in the future.

4.6 What the Future Will Bring?

The second last question presented in the questionary was regarding the participants' ideas of what their families' future in the context of bilingualism would look like, and how they thought bilingualism in general would develop in the future. Just like many of the responses for other questions this section also showed how participants' approaches and thoughts on bilingualism were mostly positive yet realistic. The children's ages and language levels were the biggest factors that created some differences in responses to the question regarding families' future. However, this question seemed to create the most consistent responses.

A clear majority of the participants believed the future of bilingualism in their family would be stable or at least they hoped so. These expectations of children's language levels staying as they are probably mean that currently the children have maintained a certain level in each of their own languages for a certain time and the participants do not see that there is anything challenging the language development or use in the family. Additionally, as one participant noted, those participants with grown up children were already living this "future" and were confident that the current share of languages in their daily life was set.

"In our family the future is already here. In general I believe bi- and multilingualism will keep growing" / "Omassa perheessä tulevaisuus on jo täällä. Yleisesti uskon, että kaksi/monikielisyys lisääntyy koko ajan."

"We will live bilingual life and enjoye our languages in the future as well" / "Tulemme elämään kaksikielistä arkea ja nauttimaan kielistämme jatkossakin."

"We'll continue communication as we have so far. Our family has gained one more language. My daughter-in-law speaks English." Jatkamme kommunikaatiota samaan tahtiin. Perheeseemme on tullut yksi kieli lisää. Miniäni puhuu englantia."

Those with younger children, especially under school age, will most likely face changes in the daily language use. It is evident, from the previous research as well as from the responses to this one, that especially school and friends change the exposure of languages and might shift the preferred language of the children. This factor was mentioned in the responses as an answer to this specific question about the future of bilingualism but also earlier when presenting that school or daycare had changed their children's language use.

”At the beginning the community language did not come into the house as such but now the eldest speaks it to the youngest The children attend a daycare that operates only in the community language.” / “Aluksi ympäristön kieli ei tullut ’ovesta sisään’, mutta nyt esikoinen puhuu nuorimmalle ympäristön kieltä. Lapset täysin ympäristön kielisessä tarhassa

Another factor that might not be present in all participants’ families are siblings. It is easier to manage the language use when there are only two adults making the choices and putting in the effort for their child’s language acquisition. Older siblings can alter this by using their preferred language with the younger ones, Braun (2014) wrote that older siblings are often the ones setting the norms for language use between siblings. This was not mentioned by any of the responses to this section as such but the siblings’ role was presented by one participants as a part of answer to another question.

”…explaining the older siblings how important it is to speak Finnish to the baby.” / “…isosisarukselle selittämisen siitä kuinka tärkeää on puhua suomea vauvalle.”

The future of languages in the families had also been a discussion point among the family members. Couple of the participants wrote how they were either themselves excited to see, what kind of language repertoire their children and wider family would have in the future, or how they had wondered it with their children. Showing, that while language and identity were often connected in the answers through-out the research, they did not necessarily cause fear for exclusion inside a family.

”I don’t know how my children will do with their own children in the future or even in which country any of us will be living. Then again us three will always speak our language together and the children’s father has quite good Finnish too.” / “En tiedä miten lapset tulevat toimimaan omien lapsiensa kanssa tulevaisuudessa tai edes missä maassa kukin meistä tulee asumaan. Toisaalta me kolme tulemme aina puhumaan omaa kieltämme keskenämme, ja lasten isälläkin on jo aika hyvä suomen taito.”

”We have joked with the children about what language will I speak to the grandchildren and what will the cousins speak among themselves.” / “Olemme lasteni kanssa vitsailleet, että mitä kieltä puhun sitten tuleville lapsenlapsilleni ja mitä serkukset oikein puhuvat keskenään.”

”It is likely that their future families will be formed around the world and be multicultural. I can’t wait to see where their paths will lead them.” / ”Todennäköistä on että heidän tulevaisuuden perheensäkkin muodostuvat maailmalle monikulttuurisiksi. Odotan innolla minnepäin maailmaa heidän polkunsa heidät johdattavat”

In the previous chapter it was noted that overall, the participants seemed to be mostly pleased with the current language levels of their children. This might also be the reason they are confident that the situation will not drastically change and that some of them pressed that they would be happy if in the future language levels would be similar to the current ones. However, few participants did address that there might be a need to work on Finnish skills in the future or that they hoped the skills would improve in the future. Couple also addressed the possibility of their children moving to Finland to study or gaining more interest in Finnish culture and language in the future. These show that while the visions for future were confident and mostly positive, the participants had realistic expectations. They acknowledged that languages need work and support to be maintained on a certain level and that their children’s own decisions and interests would be the main factors determining the future status of the languages in their lives.

The importance of Finnish language for the participants showed as well but while they addressed the benefits of knowing multiple languages the key element for many seemed to be the ability to be able to use their heritage language with their children. So, more value was laid on their own possibility to use and share the language with their children than the benefits languages could present for the children. Similar sentiment was visible in the answers of those who already had or might soon have grandchildren. They acknowledged that passing on the Finnish language might not play as big role for their own children thus they saw it as something they would have to put time and effort in if they wished their grandchildren to know the language as well.

”Me and my wife need to take care of that [bilingualism in the future] by being big part of our grandchildren’s lives. And hope that our children will support us. And it would be nice if their spouses did too.” / “Minun ja vaimoni pitää hoitaa toi olemalla iso osa lapsen lapsien elämää. Ja toivoa että lapsemme tukee meitä. Ja kiva olisi jos puolisotkin tukisivat.”

Participants’ expectations for the future followed in line with their other experiences. While they acknowledged the possible challenges and work ahead the overall attitude, they had for bilingualism in the future was positive. This was not reflected only in their responses that dealt with their family lives but also when they wrote about prospects of bilingualism globally.

”Generally I think multilingualism is quite normal on the global scalre and maybe it just grows from here when globalisation unifies even more people with differen languages.” / ”Yleisesti ajattelen monikielisyyden olevan maailman mittakaavassa hyvinkin tavallista ja ehkäpä tästä vielä vain lisääntyvän kun globalisaatio ohjaa yhä enemmän yhteen erikielisiä ihmisiä.”

”Generally I believe multilingualism will grow. Most pupils in my child’s class are trilingual. Luckily many seem to have more relaxed about multilingualism than before and bare the mixture of languages. They are not so scared of semilingualism. It's the monolinguals who are more afraid of it. Multilingualism is not seen as a fortune.” / ”Yleisesti ottaen uskon monikielisyyden lisääntyvän. Lapsen luokalla suurin osa on kolmekielisiä. Monet tuntuvan onneksi suhtautuvan monikielisyyteen rennommin kuin aiemmin ja kielten sekamelskaa siedetään paremmin. Ei niinkään pelätä enää puolikielisyyttä. Sitä pelkäävät ennemminkin yksikieliset. Monikielisyyttä ei nähdä rikkautena.”

The above quotes show that those participants who addressed the global aspect of bilingualism believed it would only become more visible and a acknowledged phenomenon. There was also hopes for more support and positive attitudes towards bilingual families and their efforts. Bilingualism is not a new phenomenon but there are sifts visible towards traditionally monolingual cultures trying to support minority languages in their realms instead of pursuing for purely monolingual society, which probably explains the imaginary of more linguistically diverse future. All in all, for most of the participants the future, whether personal or global, was going to be strongly bilingual.

Reliability

One part of any research process is to evaluate its reliability. From the very beginning of this research process, I have aimed to conduct as reliable and ethical research as possible. This was visible already in the questions formulated to collect data for the research as they were considered carefully and moulded so that they would not lead the participants on to answer a certain way, which is essential for a study's ethicality (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2015). Similarly, when choosing the participants, I went along with methods that would not let my personal biases or expectations affect the selection of participants and exclude any experiences. Formulation of the questions as well as the fact that I was not interfering the response process also made sure that the data was actually coming from participants themselves (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2015). Choosing an online form also abled participation to be fully optional and before answering participants were given information considering what the data was used for and who would be able to access it, thus, responding to the questionary can be seen as an informed consent (Tampere University, n.d. a). They also had a possibility to contact me through email or on Facebook if they had any concerns over the research. All these choices were made to follow good ethical manners (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). The whole data was only accessed by me and all personal details were deleted from it once they were deemed as unnecessary for the research. The high volume of responses and how much information was collected from them is showing that the data collection methods were appropriate for the research. Moreover, the richness and depth of the data speak for the success of the data collection.

In qualitative research it is seen that the researcher cannot fully be objective or disconnect their own values when doing the research (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2014). Following this idea, I have stated my own position: being a child of a bilingual parent, having lived in bilingual environments and being a language teacher, which have likely affected the way I have approached the topic and the data. I also acknowledge that as a researcher I have also chosen the sources and previous research read for this research, and I have ended up with sources that share a similar view on bilingualism as I do. Yet, while I have addressed my own status in relation to this research, I have consistently aimed to representing all the perspectives present in the data regardless my own experiences and views. To achieve the objective of presenting as many perspectives as possible I trialled different coding methods before ending up with the one explained in the methodological part. The data was also read multiple times in different stages of the research process to be sure it was presented accordingly. Opening the research process and

choices for readers, as I have done, are valuable part of the reliability (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 2015). My own personal goal when writing the research was to use understandable language that would make the research accessible for as many as possible and that would add to the reliability. Neither analysis, theory nor methods are hidden behind unnecessarily complex language.

As for the coding and analysis I familiarised myself well with the data before making any conclusions of it which supports the reliability (Silverman, 2017). The coding and analysis processes have been consistent as well, however, it might not follow consistency to a level where another research or even myself could come up with same categories in different time and space, which is suggested as a marker of reliability by Silverman (2017). The data collected for the research was rich and relatively large considering the level of the research and its qualitative approach, so it is likely that another researcher might have focused on different aspects of the data. This should not be a problem for the reliability, as Eskola and Suoranta (1998) have written coding of a data is never perfect and it is normal that another researcher, or even the same one, might find new views from data at another time. To support the analysis done I have also read and researched the topic widely and used my sources critically. All the authors have also been referred accordingly to make the source material transparent and for readers to be able to find it if they wished to read them further (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

The data has been handled sensitively and in the analysis process I have done my best not to read too much into the responses or present my own thoughts raised by the data as the participants'. I have also avoided making any claims, on what the participants have meant or what has been behind their wordings and experiences, that are not clearly stated in the data but rather presented possibilities and ideas that might explain them based on the previous study. Making clear distinctions between my personal thoughts, participants' experiences and research adds to the reliability and the participants' responses have been quoted as evidence when appropriate to add transparency (Creswell, 2013). All these aspects considered I personally see the research done for this thesis is relatively reliable for this level of research.

Discussion

This thesis' objective was to find out what kind of experiences and thoughts Finnish parents had in relation to bilingual upbringing outside Finland. Along the way the research also looked into whether the participants responses gave any insight into how they possibly define bilingualism and what kind of ideas they connected with bilingualism. The data followed similar patterns with previous studies done in the field on linguistics, but gave thoughts for possible future research.

The data was large and fruitful and at times processing it and presenting as much of it as possible was challenging. It is very likely that with such a colourful data some of the nuances were not noticed during the analysis part and it could have included even more than what has been presented here. What these various responses together and individually showed was how complex the bilingual reality can be, which can be also read from previous research done by Grosjean (2010). This complexity and diversity are also reflected in the title of this thesis. From the beginning it was clear that while the participants' experiences and thoughts shared some level of similarities, they were all subjective and moulded by the environment and time they were experienced in.

Even if it was not always mentioned as a reason for starting bilingual upbringing Finnish identity and its connection with language seemed to hold high value for most of the participants. This is likely the reason they had chosen to pass the language on, whether for their own sake or with hopes for their children to identify with Finnish culture as well (similar to Romo &Kennedy, 2013; Rodríquez, 2015). However, my participants seemed to value the cultural and family connections more than the possibility for jobs and education, as those were not mentioned as main reasons to start bilingual upbringing. This can be noticed also from the fact that some participants had eased their strict OPOL methods to avoid exclusion in the family. The family connection did not only seem to matter more than future prospects but also more than the competence in a language.

Many participants seemed to follow OPOL method on some level and to add Finnish language input they used different resources available for them. Such as books, movies, streaming services, audiobooks and Finnish clubs. Some parents had not noticed any methods that would not have helped them, but some mentioned that too formal studying of the language was not the

best for them. Additionally, everyone did not see a strict OPOL method as useful. These participants evaluated their children's Finnish level mostly as good and some separated productive and receptive skills of the language (see. De Houwer, 1999; McKenzie, 2018). The language usage had often moulded through-out the life for different reasons: children growing up, moving to another country, family construction changing and so on Ultimately, they showed how each family had their own individual needs and aims for bilingualism. Experiences with environment were also mostly positive but both negative and positive encounters were present in the data. Multicultural environments were linked with more positive attitudes and negative attitudes with monolingualism. Problems faced were similar to previous research done with bilingual families': children not speaking the preferred language to the parent and finding balance between the language inputs (Rodríquez, 2015; De Houwer, 1999). Number of participants also believed the future would be bilingual for their families and globally.

While Braun and Cline (2014) argued that there should be more research aimed to study specifically families with three or more languages this research did not show clear support towards that. This does not mean that specifically trilingual families' experiences would not differ from those with only two languages but in data used here the division between families with different number of languages was not apparent all the time. Only daily use of languages and lists of languages used in the families, and occasionally language level evaluations, clearly showed the differences. In other questions it was not often evident how many languages were involved in families' lives.

What I expected myself and what appeared in a previous study done with Finnish parents of bilingual families by Palviainen and Bergroth (2018), was the perception that only children born and raised in bilingual families would be bilinguals. While connection between bilingualism and biculturalism was visible in the data, it cannot be said that the participants perceived only those who grew up with multiple languages and cultures in the family to be bilingual. In Palviainen and Bergroth's (2018) research the Swedish-Finnish families seemed to have a perception that one is not really bilingual unless they have acquired the languages at early age and from their parents. I have personally come across with similar views in Finland when talking with friends and family. This research did not show any evidence of such, but it has to be admitted that it did not necessarily provide questions for such views to appear.

From this data it is also impossible to draw a conclusion of a shared concept of bilingualism between the participants that could be traced back to shared Finnish background. Although,

some implications of defining bilingualism through language competence were visible it cannot be confirmed that they would actually define bilingualism solely based on that. Thoughts drawn from this for future research will be discussed in the final chapter.

The participants generally appeared to have rather empathetic way of writing about bilingualism. This reflects the importance and value they give for their languages and bilingualism, and how aware they are of its complexity and differentiating needs of each family. Personally, I see the value of this study in the number of experiences it has aimed to show. As families' needs vary so much from one and another the benefits of different strategies and aspects should not only be looked through the language levels that have been achieved but also how the families experience them. How practical are they in the family life and what kind of experiences and encounters guide the language use in families? What kind of support can make the experience of bilingual upbringing as positive as possible for the whole family? What kind of knowledge should those working with bilingual families and the general society around them have?

Ultimately, I hope this thesis shows how much joy and value bilingualism can bring to one's life as it clearly has done for the participants of the study. It can operate as resource for those who wish to read about different experiences of bilingual upbringing but hopefully broaden the definitions and views of what bilingualism is or can be. I have personally found bilingualism to be great asset for life not just for prospects it brings in job markets and education but the joy of living life and experiencing it through multiple languages, and the beauty that is inside each language. As was written by one of the participants.

6.1 Future research

During the research process I noticed few different topics that could be relevant to study in the future. Some of them are such that I originally thought my own research might answer but the questionary ultimately did not provide right questions for those. Others were raised by the research and thoughts that came along with it.

The questions I had in mind when initially planning my thesis work were the following:

- How parents' definitions of bilingualism affect how they experience their children's language competence in the heritage language?
- How parents' aims for language competence reflect in their feelings on their children's language levels?

From the start it was evident that my own research would answer these questions. Considering the size and the level of the research, trying to answer those questions would not have been practical. Rather this sort of research and primary work done in this thesis could in the future lead to research that does respond to those questions. Research done by Oh and Fulligni (2009) where the competence in a heritage language was linked with parent-child relationship in migrant families also supports the idea that it might be beneficial to research parents' aims and concepts when bilingualism is considered. It was also a research that those two questions originally rooted from. If the competence level affects the relationship between a parent and their child, researching how parents' goals and perceptions play role in that process might help to support bilingual families' inner relationships. Setting realistic aims and defining bilingualism differently might help especially parents with stricter definitions to see the outcomes in more positive light which could possibly strengthen the relationship between them and their children. To enjoy their own bilingual reality without artificial and over demanding definitions.

As my questionary did not ask participants to define who or what bilingualism to them it would not have been reliable to draw conclusion of that from the data used for this thesis. However, I myself was still left wondering whether Finnish people have a shared view of who are bilinguals? While finishing my thesis I came across a blog post written by Denise Nymark (2020). The post itself was interesting as it addressed the family's bilingualism in Finland, and had contrary views research read for this thesis, but what really caught my attention was a comment to the post written under nickname Kieltenope. The whole original comment and its free translation can be read from the appendice, but it initiated that Finnish people have a wrong concept of bilingualism. It seemed that the commentor indeed held the view that only those who acquire their languages in natural way and hold strong enough competence in it can be considered bilinguals. While ultimately supporting language learning and bilingualism, what the comment reflects is that there might still be rather strong views on who are "real" bilinguals existing among us. The comment was surprising under that nickname as the recent national curriculum does talk about multilingualism, meaning also the variations inside a single language are considered as form of multilingualism (Opetushallitus, 2016). This comment made by a teacher makes the research of shared views and definitions seem even more relevant. If a language teacher and parent of a bilingual family has these sorts of views, what are the monolinguals' views like? How will they affect the formation of bilingual identity of the children they encounter? How will children with expat or migrant background reflect themselves if surrounded by such views? The initial question would thus be, how do Finnish people define bilingualism?

Who they consider to be “real” bilinguals? Are these definitions based on competence or more on family background as it was in Palviainen and Bergroth’s (2018) research?

In addition to that question, while reading the data and having participants who had lived years abroad, I started wondering how those definitions might change. Constructivist worldview believes that the way we see our world is shaped by the culture and environment we are living in (Creswell, 2014). This should be also taken into consideration when reading these responses. Despite identifying themselves as Finnish most of the participants are currently living outside Finland, and even those who are not have years of experience living outside the Finnish borders. It is reasonable to assume that the way they define and see bilingualism might have been shaped by their experiences in the cultures they have lived in. It is impossible to say how much their ideas have changed, or if they have at all, but it does make the question, of whether Finnish people share a certain definition of bilingualism, even more interesting. Which is why I suggest that comparing conceptions and definitions of expats and Finnish people living abroad, with those who have only lived permanently in Finland, might bring up even more information and aspects on the topic.

Personally, I find all these questions a worth to research and intriguing. They could even lead to comparing concepts of bilingualism between different language and cultural groups. All in all, as a teacher I see that they could provide information that would help especially those working with bilingual families and children, to aid them with their linguistic goals and support children’s bilingual identity to develop.

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Appendix 1 – Guideline Paper (Finnish, original)

Hei monikielisten perheiden vanhemmat,

opiskelen luokanopettajaksi Oulun yliopistossa ja tarkoituksenani on tehdä gradu ulkosuomalaisten vanhempien kokemuksista kaksi/monikieliseen kasvatukseen liittyen. Ensisijaisesti tutkimus koskee perheitä/vanhempia joissa vain toisen vanhemman äidinkieli on suomi.

Aineistoni tulee koostumaan pääasiassa kyselylomakkeista, sekä mahdollisista haastatteluista niiden lisäksi. Lomaketta täyttäessäsi voit valita oletko halukas osallistumaan myös haastatteluun. Haastattelut sovitaan erikseen niihin valittujen kanssa. Haastateltavat valitaan sen mukaan, että aineisto olisi monipuolinen eli valintaan vaikuttavat mm. lasten iät, kaksi/monikielisyyden ”taso”, sekä vanhempien tuntemukset/näkemykset aiheesta. Tutkimuksen laajuuden ja ajan vuoksi kaikkia halukkaita ei välttämättä voida haastatella.

Perheen asuinmaalla tai suomen lisäksi puhutuilla kielillä ei ole väliä. Lasten iällä ei ole väliä, mutta olisi toivottavaa, että he tuottavat puhetta jo jonkin verran. Myös vanhemmat joiden lapset ovat jo aikuisia ovat erittäin tervetulleita osallistumaan tutkimukseen. Sillä miten hyvin lapsi hallitsee eri kieliä ei myöskään ole väliä, sillä tarkoituksena ei ole tutkia lasten kielenkehitystä vaan juurikin vanhempien kokemuksia ja tuntemuksia monikieliseen kasvatukseen liittyen.

Kaikki tutkimukseen kerätty aineisto tullaan käsittelemään luottamuksellisesti. Niin lomakkeiden kuin haastattelujenkin vastaukset tullaan sisällyttämään tutkimukseen niin, ettei niiden perusteella voi tunnistaa yksittäisiä henkilöitä. Sekä lomakkeet, että haastattelut hävitetään tutkimuksen valmistuttua.

Jos olet kiinnostunut osallistumaan tutkimukseen täytä ohessa oleva lomake, jonka jälkeen voit lähettää sen osoitteeseen

Kaikkiin lomakkeissa oleviin kysymyksiin ei tarvitse vastata, jos niihin vastaaminen tuntuu epämukavalta. Pituus rajaa vastauksiin ei ole.

Vastaan mielelläni myös kaikkiin kysymyksiin tutkimukseen liittyen.

Ystävällisin terveisin

Iida Jylhä

Appendix 2 – Guideline paper (English, translation)

Hello parents of bilingual families,

I'm a student teacher from University of Oulu and I'm planning to do my master's thesis study on Finnish migrant parents' experiences on bi/multilingualism. Primarily the research focuses on those families/parents where only one of the parents speaks Finnish.

The data will mostly consist of responses to the questionary, and possible interviews in addition to them. When filling in the form you can choose whether you are willing to be interviewed as well. Interviews will be personally agreed with those chosen for them. Interviewees will be chosen so that the data will be as diverse as possible so details such as children's ages, "level" of bilingualism and parents' feelings and ideas regarding bilingualism, will affect the selection. Due to the size of the research and time available it is not possible to interview all of those interested.

It does not matter where the family lives or what languages are spoken in the family in addition to Finnish. Children's ages do not matter either, but it is preferred that they produce some amount of speech already. Parents whose children are already grown up are thus more than welcome to take part in this research as well. How well children know each of their languages does not matter as the aim of this research is not to study children's language development, but the focus is on parents' experiences and feelings on bilingual upbringing.

All data collected for the research will be processed confidentially. Responses and interviews will be included in the thesis work so that individuals won't be recognised based on the quotations used. The forms and interviews will be destroyed after the research process is finished.

If you are interested in taking part of the research, you can fill in the form included here and send it to the following e-mail address.

It is not mandatory to answer all the questions in the form if they feel uncomfortable. There is no maximum limit to the responses. I will also answer any questions related to the research

Iida Jylhä

Appendix 3 – Questionary (Finnish, original)

Maa:

Lasten iät:

Kielet:

1. Millaisia ajatuksia/oletuksia sinulla oli kaksi/monikielisestä kasvatuksesta ennen sen aloittamista? Millaiset tavoitteet ja lähtökohdat olivat?

2. Mitä syitä sinulla on/on ollut aloittaa monikielinen kasvatus?

3. Ovatko syyt tai tavoitteet kaksi/monikielisyyden osalta muuttuneet prosessin aikana?

4. Miten toteutatte kaksi/monikielisyyttä arjessa? Eli miten kielet jakautuvat, miten tuette eri kieliä?

5. Millainen ympäröivän yhteisön reaktio on ollut kaksi/monikielisyyteen?

6. Mitkä keinot olet kokenut toimiviksi kaksi/monikielisyyden edistämisen kannalta?

7. Mitkä keinot eivät ole oman kokemuksesi pohjalta toimineet?

8. Miten arvioisit lastesi kielitaidon tällä hetkellä? Miten koet tilanteen itse?

9. Miten näet kaksi/monikielisyyden tulevaisuuden omassa perheessäsi? Entä yleisesti?

10. Kerro vapaasti tuntemuksistasi ja ajatuksistasi kaksi/monikielisyyteen liittyen.

11. Oletko kiinnostunut vastaamaan mahdollisiin lisäkysymyksiin tai olemaan haastateltavana tämän lomakkeen lisäksi?

Kyllä Ei

Appendix 4 – Questionary (English, translation)

Country of residence:

Children's ages:

Languages:

1. What kind of thoughts/assumptions you had in relation to bilingual/multilingual upbringing before starting the process? What were the aims and starting points like?
2. What reasons did you have/have had for starting multilingual upbringing?
3. Have reasons or goals for bilingualism/multilingualism changed during the process?
4. How do you practice bilingualism/multilingualism in everyday life? Meaning, how are the languages divided and how do you support each language?
5. What have the reactions of the surrounding environment been like in relation to bilingualism/multilingualism?
6. What methods have you found useful for supporting bilingualism/multilingualism?
7. What methods have not worked based on your own experience?
8. How would you evaluate your children's current language competence? How do you experience the situation yourself?
9. How do you see the future of bilingualism/multilingualism in your own family? What about in general?
10. Tell freely about your feelings and thoughts regarding bilingualism/multilingualism.
11. Are you interested in answering possible additional questions or being interviewed in addition to completing this form?

Yes No

Appendix 5 – Blogpost comment (Finnish, original)

Kieltenope
1.5.2021 klo 05:30

Kaksikielisyys on Suomessa väärin ymmärretty, sillä kaksikielisyys tarkoittaa 2 omaksuttua kieltä, ei äidinkieltä + opittua kieltä (paitsi jos opittu kieli on aloitettu hyvin nuorena ja sitä käytetään jatkuvasti). Omaksuminen tarkoittaa luontaista kielen oppimista (eli kukaan ei sitä opeta vaan lapsi oppii sen ympäristöstä) ja oppiminen taas kielen (systemaattista) opettelua. Kielen oppiva ei koskaan tule saavuttamaan natiivin kaltaista kielen osaamista ja yleensä tämä näkyy mm. ääntämisessä. Monokielisyys ei myöskään tue muiden kielen oppimista, eivät suomea puhuvat viroa tai unkaria opettele. Kuinka montaa kieltä mainitsemistasi olet itse opetellut?

Mielestäni on omituista tehdä lapsen elämästä hankalampaa ja odottaa kouluikään asti, kun kuitenkin käytätte arjessa suomea ja mainitset itsekin kokevasi eroja kielten välillä. On myös eri asia verrata tilannettanne yksikielisiin perheisiin. On aivan eri asia lähteä opettamaan lapselle vierasta kieltä kuin toista kotimaista, jota itse puhuu sujuvasti. Mitä jos vertaisit tilannettanne monikielisiin perheihin? Heistä suurin osa puhuu enemmän kuin yhtä kieltä lapselle.

Lisäksi suomi on kaksikielinen maa vain kielipoliittisesti. Ruotsi on vähemmistökieli eikä sillä pärjää läheskään kaikkialla Suomessa (sen sijaan suomella pärjää melkein kaikkialla Suomessa). Todellisuudessa Suomi on ”kaksikielinen” suomi + englanti, sillä englannin osaaminen alkaa olla jo kansalaistaidon tasolla. Edelleen tosin ”kaksikielisyys” on harhaa johtava, sillä harva englantia osaa edes C1 tasolla. Jotta suomi olisi todellisesti kaksikielinen, pitäisi toinen kotimainen kieli aloittaa jo ennen 10v ikää (mieluiten aiemmin) ja sitä pitäisi oikeasti käyttää ja kohdata elämässä.
Jotkut tutkimulset eivät välttämättä kannata opettamaan kieliä lapsille, joita ei itse puhu äidinkielenään tai sujuvasti ja/tai jos kieltä ei aio puhua lapselle koko ajan (tähänkin löytyy eri näkökulmia). Maailmassa on hyvin monta monikielistä perhettä, joissa lapsi omaksuu monta kieltä eikä se tuota paljoa ongelmia, joten ei ole mitään pakkoa ”opetella ensin äidinkieli kunnolla”.

Jokainen perhe tehköötkuten haluaa, eikä minua ainakaan muiden kielivalinnat kiinnosta. Kannattaa myös muistaa, että jos äidinkielesi ei olisi ruotsi, tuskin kukaan tukisi valintaasi. Ymmärrän valintasi siinä tapauksessa, että et itse puhu suomea tarpeeksi usein tai luontevasti, jotta lapsi oppisi suomen kunnolla. Sitä et kuitenkaan maininnut syissäsi.

Listaamasi syyt eivät ole kovin järkeviä tai vedenpitäviä ja kaikista vähiten tieteelliseen tutkimukseen perustuvia (liitäthän ensi kerralla tutkimukset, joiden väität tukevan mielipidettäsi, jotta et levitä väärää tietoa). En olisi muuten edes lähtenyt kommentoimaan, mutta et selkeästi ole perillä kielitieteestä tai kielten opetuksesta, vaikka kerrot mielipiteitäsi faktoina. Kirjoitathan jatkossa selkeästi mikä on tieteelliseen tutkimukseen perustuvaa ja mikä sinun mielipiteesi. 🙂

T. Kielten ope, joka puhuu 5 kieltä ja elää monikielisessä perheessä.

Appendix 6 – Translation of the blogpost comment

Bilingualism is understood wrongly in Finland because bilingualism means acquisition of 2 languages, not mother tongue + learnt language (except if learning the language has started at very young age and is being used all the time). Acquisition means natural learning of the language (so no-one is teaching it but a child learns it from the environment) and learning a language (systematic) studying/practicing. Person learning a language will never achieve a native-like control of the language and usually it's visible for example in pronunciation. Monolingualism does not support learning a language either, Finnish speakers do no learn Estonian or Hungarian. How many of the languages you mentioned have your learnt yourself?

In my opinion it is odd to make a child's life harder and wait until school age when you use Finnish in everyday life, and you mentioned experiencing differences between use of the languages. It is also different thin to compare the situation with monolingual families. It is a completely different matter to start teaching a child a foreign language than the second official language that oneself speaks fluently. What about if you compared the situation with multilingual families? Most of the speaks more than one language to their children.

Additionally, Finland is bilingual country only language politically. Swedish is a minority language, and one can't manage through it even nearly everywhere in Finland (whereas with Finnish one does manage almost anywhere in Finland). In reality Finland is "bilingual" Finnish + English, as knowledge of English is almost on the level of a civics skill. Still, however, "bilingualism" is misguiding, as only few knows English even on the C1 level. For Finland to be really a bilingual country the second official language should start before the age of 10 (preferably earlier) and it should really be used and encountered in life.

Some research might not support the idea of teaching languages which one does not speak as a mother tongue or fluently to a child, and/or if one is not planning to constantly speak those language to the child (there are multiple views on this too). In the world there are multiple multilingual families where the children acquire multiple languages and it does not cause any issues, so there is no must "to learn the mother tongue properly first".

Each family can do as they wish and I at least am not interested in others' language choices. It's good to remember that if your mother tongue wasn't Swedish doubt anyone would support your choice. I understand your choice in the case you yourself don't speak Finnish often or naturally for your children to learn it. However, you did not mention that as a reason.

The reasons you listed are not really sensible or waterproof and the least based on scientific research (you should include the research in the future that you claim to support your opinion so you won't be spreading wrong information). I wouldn't have commented but you clearly are not aware of linguistics or language teaching despite presenting your opinions as facts. In the future write clearly what is based on a scientific research and what on your own opinion. ☺