INDIVIDUALS AT THE HEART OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE:

Local level administrators' views on the development of the organization of language education through top-down projects, bottom-up reorganization, and cooperation and communication

Master's Thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Suomen hallitus ja yritysmaailma tunnistavat kielitaitotarpeen. Kielten opiskelun suosio on kuitenkin laskenut vuosien ajan. Kielikoulutusta koskevan päätöksenteon hajautuessa yksittäisillä kunnilla ja päättäjillä on entistä laajemmat mahdollisuudet järjestää kielten opetusta paikallisesti tahtonsa mukaan. Aiempi tutkimus (ks. esim. Kyllönen and Saarinen 2010b) on kuitenkin osoittanut, että päättävissä asemissa olevat henkilöt eivät anna erityistä painoa kielikoulutuksen järjestämisen kehittämiselle.

Tämä tutkielma kartoittaa sivistysjohtajien ja rehtoreiden kokemuksia useiden koulutuksen järjestämisen välineiden vahvuuksista ja heikkouksista. Tutkielman taustana käytetään aiempaa tutkimustietoa suomalaisen kielikoulutuksen järjestämisestä, ongelmista ja kehittämisestä. Tutkielman aineisto kerättiin haastattelututkimuksella, johon osallistui kaksi sivistysjohtajaa ja neljä koulun johdossa toimivaa henkilöä kahdesta eri kunnasta. Haastatteluaineiston analyysi pohjautuu fenomenografiseen viitekehykseen. Analyysissä keskitytään haastateltavien kokemuksiin hankkeista, paikallisesta kehitystyöstä, sekä viestinnästä ja yhteistyöstä. Heikkouksien ja vahvuuksien kartoittamisen lisäksi analyysissä kuvaillaan haastateltavien aktiivisuutta suhteessa eri koulutuksen järjestämisen välineisiin.

Haastattelujen perusteella vaikuttaa siltä, että sivistysjohtajat ja rehtorit ovat melko passiivisia hankkeiden suhteen. He pitävät hankkeiden suurimpana rasitteena byrokraattisuutta. Hankemuotoinen rahoitus ei myöskään mahdollista paikallisten toimintatapojen kehittämistä. Paikallisen kehitystyön suhteen haastateltavat ovat aktiivisia ja halu muuttaa asioita kielten opetuksen järjestämisessä kumpuaa usein omista aiemmista kokemuksista. Sähköpostiin painottunut viestintä nähdään ongelmallisena. Henkilökohtaiset kontaktit, epäviralliset verkostot, sekä lehtijutut ja palkinnot puolestaan koetaan hyödyllisiksi. Tutkielmassa esitetään, että kunnissa ja kouluissa kaivataan koordinoitua tukea kielikoulutuksen kehittämisessä informaation määrän ja projektien vaatiman tietotaidon tarpeen kasvaessa. Epäviralliset verkostot ja paikalliset toimintatavat kätkevät paljon hyödyntämätöntä potentiaalia. Jatkotutkimuksen kautta olisi mahdollista hankkia syventävää tietoa joko tietystä kielikoulutuksen järjestämisen välineestä tai muilta koulutuksen järjestämisen tasoilta.

Contents

1 INTRODUCTION

The need for foreign language proficiency is widely recognized in Finland. The national government lists the diversification and increase of the provision of language studies as one of the key projects for the government term (Prime Minister's Office 2015: 18). The Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK 2014) argues that diverse language proficiency is a requirement for being a part of international networks. It claims that as Finland has become more international, language proficiency is important to companies of all sizes and to employees in all positions. Nevertheless, the study of elective foreign languages has in general been in decline for the past twenty years (e.g. OPH 2001; OPH 2014). The selection of foreign languages has become narrow (e.g. Kangasvieri et al. 2011) and pupils' opportunities to study foreign languages vary depending on where they go to school (e.g. Nyyssölä 2009b; OKM 2010). As the decision making process regarding foreign language education has become decentralized, the organization of language teaching can vary greatly on the local level (Laukkanen 1998; Kyllönen and Saarinen 2010b). One municipality can drastically reduce the supply of foreign languages, while another attempts to increase the selection through reorganization of language education, all at the same time.

The present study sets out to examine local level educational administrators' views on various tools that occupy a role in the development of the organization of language education. Regional differences in the organization of language education have been exposed through statistics (e.g. Nyyssölä 2009). Yet, to understand the reality of educational decision making on the local level, it is necessary to take individual administrators into account, as previous research indicates that the will of local level decision makers is of high importance in regards to the organization of language education (e.g. Hämäläinen et al. 2007; Kyllönen and Saarinen 2010b). For the present study, two heads of education and four people working in school level administration in two municipalities, six people in total, were interviewed in early 2016. The analysis of the interview data was based on a phenomenographic research

approach and data oriented content analysis. In addition, categories adapted from the theory of social action were employed. Through exploration of local level educational administrators views' on top-down development projects, local bottom-up reorganization of language education, and communication and cooperation, the present study exposed which aspects of these tools for educational development did the individual decision makers consider either beneficial or detrimental. This information can be employed by actors on various levels of educational administration to create ways to support local level administrators in the task of organizing language education. In addition, as the topic is little researched, the present study provides a starting point for further studies to investigate perceptions of individual administrators on various aspects of the development of the organization of language teaching in greater depth.

After the introduction, chapter two provides background information on the organization of language education in Finland. First, based on previous literature, the chapter will provide an overview of the organization, history and problems of Finnish foreign language education. Second, both statistics regarding the supply of foreign languages and the role of the individual decision makers are discussed in the chapter. Third, top-down development projects and local bottom-up reorganization of language education are introduced with examples. Chapter three describes the research design in detail. Chapter four presents the findings of the present study. Final conclusions are drawn and the whole study and its implications are discussed in chapter five.

2 ORGANIZATION OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Through previous literature, this background chapter presents an overview of various aspects related to the organization of language education in Finland. Chapter 2.1 defines the key terms and concepts of the present study, which include policies

and the language program of basic and upper secondary education. In chapter 2.2, the national and local level hierarchies of administration are discussed. Chapter 2.3 demonstrates some of the processes that have led to a decentralized system of educational decision making and to the elevated role of municipalities. In chapter 2.4, a brief overview of historical development of foreign language education in Finland both before and after the comprehensive school reform is presented. After this, the major problems that Finnish foreign language education currently faces are discussed in chapter 2.5. In chapter 2.6, the current issues are viewed in the light of statistical information on various factors that may affect the supply of foreign language education. Chapter 2.7 in turn discusses the role of individual decision makers as a qualitative factor that affects the organization of language education. In chapters 2.8 and 2.9, national top-down projects and bottom-up local reorganization of language education are discussed through examples.

2.1 Basis of Finnish foreign language education

In order to discuss Finnish foreign language education, some of the underlying key concepts and terms need to be defined. Perhaps the most central for the present study is the concept of foreign language teaching policies. These policies are drafted on a variety of levels ranging from international institutions to individuals in schools. The policies attempt to provide answers for many key questions of language education that are of interest for the present study. Besides language teaching policies, topics such as the legal basis of language teaching in Finland, the current structure of the language program, and a grouping system for municipalities will be briefly defined in this chapter.

On the one hand, foreign language teaching policy, as the name already suggests, can be seen to relate to both language policies and education policies (Sajavaara et al. 2007: 15). On the other hand, foreign language teaching policies can be considered to occupy the area between the more general language policy of the country and the educational institutions responsible for the practical execution of teaching. In other

words, a foreign language teaching policy indicates how the ideals, goals and contents of language policy can be realized in education. (Takala et al. 2000: 249). Foreign language teaching policy, at its simplest, consists of the plans and practical measures necessary to provide a country with a sufficient number of people proficient in foreign languages (Takala 1993: 54). Nevertheless, this seemingly simple goal is frequently distorted by ethnic, linguistic, geographic, demographic, social, psychological, cultural, political and economic factors (Takala et al. 2000: 251). For example, as Sajavaara et al. (2007: 21) suggest, for decades the authorities have made the rational argument that Russian is a language that guarantees employment, especially in business. Yet, such rationality alone is not enough to increase the popularity of the language.

Foreign language teaching policies need to provide solutions to various issues. The following list is compiled based on the summary of Ingram 1989 by Takala et al. (2000: 251-252):

- The languages that are included,
- the extent to which the study is compulsive or elective,
- the skills that are pursued and their extent,
- the length of the courses, and the starting age for language study,
- the method of learning (for example: classroom teaching, self-study, distance learning),
- the need for qualified teachers, and
- the design of teaching materials, courses and the whole language teaching model.

Takala et al. (2000: 250-251) suggest that solutions to such issues should be created systematically, thoroughly, and consistently. Yet, Sajavaara et al. (2007: 17) remark that decision making is often fragmented, as decisions are made on multiple levels. The responsibility for the practical execution of the decisions and plans is also divided between various actors. In addition, as explained by Takala et al. (2000: 251), financial reasons have also become central in the decision-making process.

From a legal point of view, the role of foreign languages has not been defined in the Constitution and, therefore, has been prone to change in comparison to the national and minority languages of Finland. Finland's general language policy, which is the basis for the foreign language teaching policy, is defined in the Constitution. The Constitution of Finland (Finlex 11.6.1999/731, 17 §) establishes the bilingual nature of Finnish society as both Finnish and Swedish are named as the national languages. According to Latomaa and Nuolijärvi (2005: 195), the bilingual status of the country affects the linguistic status of municipalities and the language proficiency required of civil servants. As Takala (1993: 57) points out, because of their status as national languages, Finnish and Swedish have been studied even under the Russian rule in the 19th century. Various laws also secure the status of some minority languages, which comprise of Finnish Sign language, Finnish-Swedish sign language, Roma, Karelian and the Sami languages (Finlex 11.6.1999/731, 17 §; Finlex 10.4.2015/359; Kotimaisten kielten keskus n.d.). As foreign language teaching has not been dictated by the constitution, its status and role in Finnish society has been more open to fluctuation. These changes will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.4.

In the current educational system, foreign languages are organized in categories based on the grade level in which the language study begins and whether it is compulsory or not. There are considerable differences between the structures of language programs in Finnish- and Swedish-speaking municipalities. The present study focuses on Finnish-speaking municipalities, since they form the majority of municipalities in Finland. According to Tilastokeskus (2015a: 26) 268 out of total 317 municipalities are classified as monolingual Finnish-speaking. Latomaa and Nuolijärvi (2005: 186); Tilastokeskus (2015b); OPH (2014), and Finlex 422/2012, 7§ help us formulate the following definitions on the categories of foreign languages:

Table 1 Categories of foreign languages in Finnish schools

Language	Compulsory / elective	Grade level
A1	Compulsory	1-6. Practically the study begins in grade three the latest.
A2	Elective	1-5. Most commonly in grade five.
B1	Compulsory	6-9. One of the national languages. Thus, technically not a foreign language.
B2	Elective	7-9.
B3	Elective	Upper secondary school.

The present study is interested in the local level and municipalities as entities and employs the classification system by Tilastokeskus, which is also used in various other studies (see Nyyssölä and Jakku-Sihvonen 2009, for example). Tilastokeskus (2015b: 24) has established a way of organizing municipalities in three categories based on the amount and density of population. Urban municipalities are defined as municipalities where at least 90 percent of the population lives in urban settlements, or where the largest urban settlement has a population of at least 15 000 people. Semi-urban municipalities, in turn, have at least 60 percent, but less than 90 percent of the population living in urban settlements and the population of the largest urban settlement is between at least 4000 but below 15 000 people. The municipalities that do not fit into the categories presented above are classified as rural municipalities.

2.2 Hierarchy of Finnish educational administration

Like all Finnish basic education, foreign language teaching is shaped by a hierarchy of actors ranging from the national to the local level. To begin with, an overview of the national level actors is provided. On the highest level, as explained by Latomaa & Nuolijärvi (2005: 150), there is the national government who decide the broad

objectives and how the teaching time for instruction is distributed in different subjects and subject groups. OKM (2010: 20) further clarify that within the Finnish government it is the Ministry of Education and Culture that is specialized in the development of legislation that is related to education. The following laws create the basis for all basic education: the Basic Education Act (628/1998), Basic Education Decree (852/1998), and the Government Decree on the General National Objectives and Distribution of Lesson Hours in Basic Education (1435/2001) (OKM 2015a). In support of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the highest authority of national administration of education and training, operates the National Board of Education. The National Board of Education is a group of experts who are responsible for the development of education and the improvement of educational results (OKM 2010: 20). According to their website (OPH 2015) their activities include "preparing the national core curricula and requirements for qualifications, developing education and teaching staff as well as providing services for the education sector and administrative services". In addition they publish statistics on "the costs of education, educational institutions, student numbers, applicants and graduates".

The local level of the hierarchy of education consists mainly of municipalities and individual schools. As stated by OKM (2010: 20) it is usually the municipality that is the entity responsible for the organization of education, since municipalities are required to provide basic education to the children of the area. Yet, it is also possible for the state, a private entity or a foundation to provide teaching. Latomaa and Nuolijärvi (2005: 149) elaborate that municipalities operate and create their own local curricula governed by the national objectives and core contents of instruction. Individual schools also have their own school-based curricula through which they display the school's special character, function, and educational assumptions. Within municipalities the educational decision making is handled by a local board of education (OKM 2010: 20). In addition, there might be school boards directing the activity of individual schools. As a summary, the following figure (figure 1) shows a simplified visualization of the hierarchy of the Finnish educational administration:
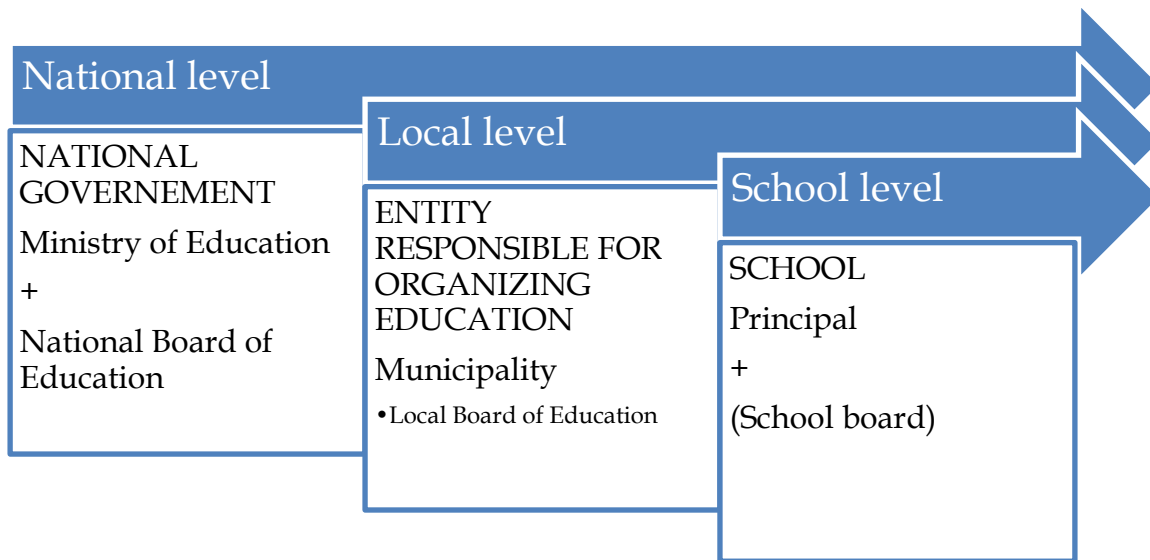
Figure 1 Presentation of the hierarchy of educational administration in Finland

2.3 Decentralization of educational decision making

The way decisions regarding education are made has changed over the past decades as a result of various political decisions. There are two key changes that are connected to the role of the central administration. First, the means of guiding the decision-making process have changed. While the decision-making process was earlier regulated through legislative norms, it has become guided through information. Second, the decision-making process has become increasingly decentralized. The central administration has devolved a lot of its power to local authorities and individual schools. The two shifts in the role of the central administration have occurred alongside each other, and understanding the changes helps to provide a more comprehensive view of the current ways educational decisions are made, also in language education.

There are multiple ways of guiding educational decision making, and the importance and role of these means have shifted over time. OKM (2010: 20) lists the following means of guiding educational decision making:

- Legislation;

- resources: decisions on finances, personnel and distribution of teaching time;

- contents: curricula (national and local); and

- information: knowledge on the functionality of the teaching and guiding system.

Laukkanen (1998: 139-142) suggests that the initially dominant role of regulation through nationally binding legislation has diminished over time, while other means of guidance have become more prominent as they are more in line with the tendency of devolving power to local authorities. OKM (2010: 21) confirm this development. Instead of schools, the focus of legislation is on guiding bigger units, types of educational institutions. Also, although statutes are still the most central way of guidance, there are fewer of them. The role of financing as a way of guidance has diminished, while information guidance has become more prominent. OKM (2010: 21) argue that the balance between different means of guidance settled roughly in its current form around the change of millennia.

In the decades preceding the change of millennia, there was a constant development towards the decentralization of educational decision making. Laukkanen (1998: 139-142) presents a historic overview of how the focus of educational decision making shifted from central to local between the 1970s and 1990s. During the 1970s, educational decisions were made by the central administration, which had a decisive role in the comprehensive school reform which was carried out during the decade. The effects and importance of the reform will be discussed in chapter 2.4. In the early 1980s changes in legislation increased the freedom of municipalities and schools to make decisions and, as a result, gave them more control over the development of education. Instead of regulation through legislation, the central administration gently promoted the "good" measures taken by schools through various projects. In 1991 the government accepted the first Education and Research Development Plan, a key document of Finnish educational policy that directs the implementation of the education and research policy goals, a new version of which is adopted by the government every four years (Laukkanen 1998: 140; OKM 2015b).

This led to further decentralization of the educational decision making into municipalities. The focus was on individuality and the opportunities for schools to profile themselves. While the path of decentralization continued, the central administration assumed new ways of guidance and became more active than in the 1980s. The regulation through legal norms was replaced by target results, information, and evaluation. Jakku-Sihvonen (2009: 29) argues that the tendency of decentralization continued with the legislative reforms of 1999. Basic education was to be a part of social services and fit the local financial framework and development interests. The central assumption, according to OKM (2010: 21), was that the entities responsible for organizing education locally would actively develop their own performance. Instead of regulating individual schools, the central administration was more interested in education as a whole and its prerequisites.

The concrete effects of the decentralization process for language education are up for debate. Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b: 1) suggest that the decentralization process has created a situation where the national education policy can manifest itself very differently on the local level. The national policy allows regional differences and variation between the concrete measures taken by municipalities. On the one hand, municipalities can, for example, cut A2-language teaching completely from their schools, but on the other hand, municipalities can develop models that fit local needs. For instance, as explained by Sajavaara et al. (2007: 66), in Kotka the selection of A2-language is limited to Russian only, which ensures the formation of groups. Jakku-Sihvonen (2009: 34) argues that since the decisions regarding the quality of education are now extensively made in municipalities, the national administration is fairly powerless when it comes to the variety of languages offered in basic education. She suggests that more attention should be paid to regional equality in education in the current situation. Sajavaara et al. (2007: 18) bring up the point that decentralization might cause the values and goals of the educational decision making to differentiate. They suggest that there is a need for coordination, public discussion, and evaluation to help different actors understand their role as a part of education as a whole. Sajavaara et al. (2007: 18-19) also illuminate how values, goals and actions

can contradict each other. For example, while offering a wide array of languages to choose from is considered important, the actions are ultimately guided by individual and financial resources. Consistent decision making is also complicated by the ideologies, attitudes and emotions that surround foreign languages.

2.4 History of foreign language teaching in Finland

Foreign language teaching in Finland has gone through various phases. As much as the comprehensive school reform of the 1970s was decisive for the whole education system, it can also be seen as a watershed moment in the development of language education. In this chapter I will present a brief overview of the development of language education both before and after the reform. The past developments in Finnish foreign language teaching policies help to understand the current situation and its issues.

In the time preceding the comprehensive school reform, the target audience of language teaching and the variety of languages studied changed considerably. Latomaa and Nuolijärvi (2005: 186), and Piri (2001: 113) suggest that foreign language study was prominent in Finnish schools already during the Russian rule and the early stages of independence. However, as a key difference to the present day, foreign languages were only taught to the academically oriented pupils. Havén (1999: 48) explains that until the late 1930s, secondary schools (Finnish *oppikoulu*) catered for the minority of wealthy families that lived mostly in cities. Piri (2001: 104) suggests that foreign languages were seen as the most challenging subject group, and they occupied a central role in the curricula of secondary schools. Latomaa and Nuolijärvi (2005: 188) explain that the variety of languages studied has over time shifted from classical languages such as Greek and Latin, towards the so called modern languages. Within the modern languages, the changes in the roles of Russian and German, well illustrate how the language program is prone to change. Latomaa and Nuolijärvi (2005: 188) and Takala (1993:57) explain that Russian lost its status as a compulsory subject after Finland gained independence in 1917, as the willingness

to study the language rapidly decreased. Historic factors also affected the status of German. German used to be the first foreign language to be studied, but after the Second World War and the defeat of Germany, the National Board of Education suggested that the status of English and Russian had to be improved, which shifted the focus away from German. König (2004: 6-7) suggests that the postwar decline of the role of German as an international language and the increased prominence of English were widespread phenomena. For more information on the historical and cultural aspects behind the ascent of English to a global language, see Crystal (2003) for instance.

The comprehensive school reform of the 1970s made language study possible and compulsory for everyone, but the initial set up of the language program was not without its issues. Lampinen (2000: 59) points out that the formation of the comprehensive school drew from the ideal of educational equality, according to which origin, location, or gender should not limit taking part in education. This ideal was extended to language teaching as well. Latomaa and Nuolijärvi (2005: 186) explain that already during the 1960s language study was set to begin at a lower grade level and the teaching was extended to wider parts of the pupil population. However, it was the comprehensive school reform that made language study compulsory to every pupil. Takala (1993: 58-59) explains that it was originally suggested that only one foreign language, English, would be compulsory, but it was eventually decided also to make the second national language, Swedish (and Finnish to Swedish-speakers), compulsory. In addition, it was decided that bigger municipalities could offer French, German, or Russian as a choice for the first foreign language. To execute such an arrangement, however, municipalities required an approval from the national authorities and 32 pupils to form the group. Thus, only twenty of the roughly 500 municipalities had employed this practice by 1977.

After the comprehensive school was established, there have been various efforts to diversify foreign language education. Takala (1993: 59-60) describes the committee report of 1979 as a sketch for a long-term language teaching policy. The report

included a few macro-level proposals regarding A-languages that were later made into a law. First, the report recommended that the size of the municipality should affect the number of languages that are offered as an A-language. Thus, the population of a municipality alone became a decisive factor in the variety of languages offered and a cabinet approval was no longer necessary. Second, the municipalities always had to offer English and Swedish. Third, the group size requirement was suggested to be lowered to 20 pupils instead of the previous requirement of 32 pupils. Other suggestions that did not become a law included a recommendation that all Finnish citizens should have knowledge of the other national language (Finnish or Swedish) and one foreign language. In addition, it was advised that everyone should study English, regardless of whether it had been selected as the first foreign language or not. While English was to be studied by all pupils, the committee suggested that the number of pupils who study languages other than English as their first foreign language should be increased. Later, as attempts to diversify the selection of the first foreign language had not succeeded as planned, the curricular reform of 1985 introduced the possibility to study an optional foreign language in grades 1-6 (A2-language). All of these changes and proposals can be seen as the blueprint of the current foreign language teaching policy.

In addition to the national level decisions, Finnish foreign language teaching has also been influenced by international actors, especially by the European Union. As explained by Sajavaara et al. (2007: 19), the development of foreign language teaching policies is not just a national matter, but is influenced by various international agreements, strategies, and plans. The European Union has been one of the key actors from Finnish point of view ever since Finland became a part of the union in 1995. In an action plan on promoting language learning and linguistic diversity (European Commission 2004) the European Commission outlines the following goals:

- "Lifelong language learning"; each citizen should learn two foreign languages,
- "better language teaching", and
- "building a language-friendly environment".

Sajavaara et al. (2007: 19) also point out the work the Council of Europe has done to support language education. As a concrete measure, they have introduced the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which in Finland has been adapted to foreign language teaching in particular. The CEFR was developed to provide a common and comprehensive basis to be employed on multiple levels of educational development: syllabuses and curricula, teaching materials, and evaluation (Council of Europe 2001: 10). On a concrete level the CEFR provides a six-level framework for describing language proficiency (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2). On a policy level, it is important to point out that the CEFR promotes concepts such as plurilingualism, which expands the ideas encompassed in the term multilingualism (Council of Europe 2001: 4-5). Instead of a mental separation of various languages and cultures in a person's mind, in the plurilingualist view a person builds a communicative competence where the knowledge of various languages and cultures interact flexibly. From the point of view of educational development, the CEFR is a step away from the goal, where learners attempt to master multiple languages in isolation and reach a native-like proficiency.

2.5 Challenges in Finnish foreign language education

A lot of work has been put into the development of foreign language education over the years and many positive results have been gained. Yet, the Finnish foreign language education presently faces multiple challenges that need to be overcome so that the language needs of the nation are met in the future as well. The popularity of elective foreign language study has seen a considerable decline in the past two decades. Finnish foreign language proficiency has become narrow as English dominates. Regional inequality divides the country as the type and location of a municipality dictate the opportunities to study foreign language. These issues are addressed in this chapter.

The study of both of the elective A2- and B2-languages has been in decline since the mid-1990s, but there has been slight revival in their popularity in the recent years.

The study of A2-languages has decreased considerably from the late 1990s into the 2010s. The statistics by the National Board of Education (OPH 2001: 21) show that every year between 1996 and 2000 more than a third of 5th graders studied an A2-language. The high point was reached in 1997 with 41 percent. In comparison, between 2008 and 2012, only roughly a quarter of 5th graders were learning an A2-language (OPH 2014: 45). The lowest percentage of 24.3 was seen in 2009, but the statistics of following years (2010-2012) show a slight increase in popularity up to 26.6 percent. Part of the decline might be explained by the fact that many municipalities have cut A2-language language teaching from their programs. SUKOL (the Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland), an organization that aims to "promote the instruction and study of foreign languages in Finland", has gathered statistics on the popularity of foreign language study (SUKOL n.d.). The statistics reveal that between 1999 and 2006 the number of municipalities that offer A2-language study has fallen from 61.2 to 41.4 percent, a drop of nearly 20 percentage points (SUKOL 2009). Kangasvieri et al. (2011: 10-11) report that B2-language study went through a more pronounced decline in popularity than A2-languges. Between 1994 and 2009 the percentage of 8th to 9th graders who studied a B2-language fell from 39.4 to 14.9. However, if the drop in popularity was drastic, B2-languages have also somewhat regained popularity in the recent years with 17.2 percent of 8th to 9th graders learning a B2-language in 2012 (OPH 2014: 46). Despite the positive development in the recent years, the popularity of both A2- and B2-language study is far from the peak levels of the late 1990s. The development in the popularity of both A2- and B2-languages is summarized in the figure below (OPH 2001; OPH 2003; OPH 2005; OPH 2010; OPH 2014).
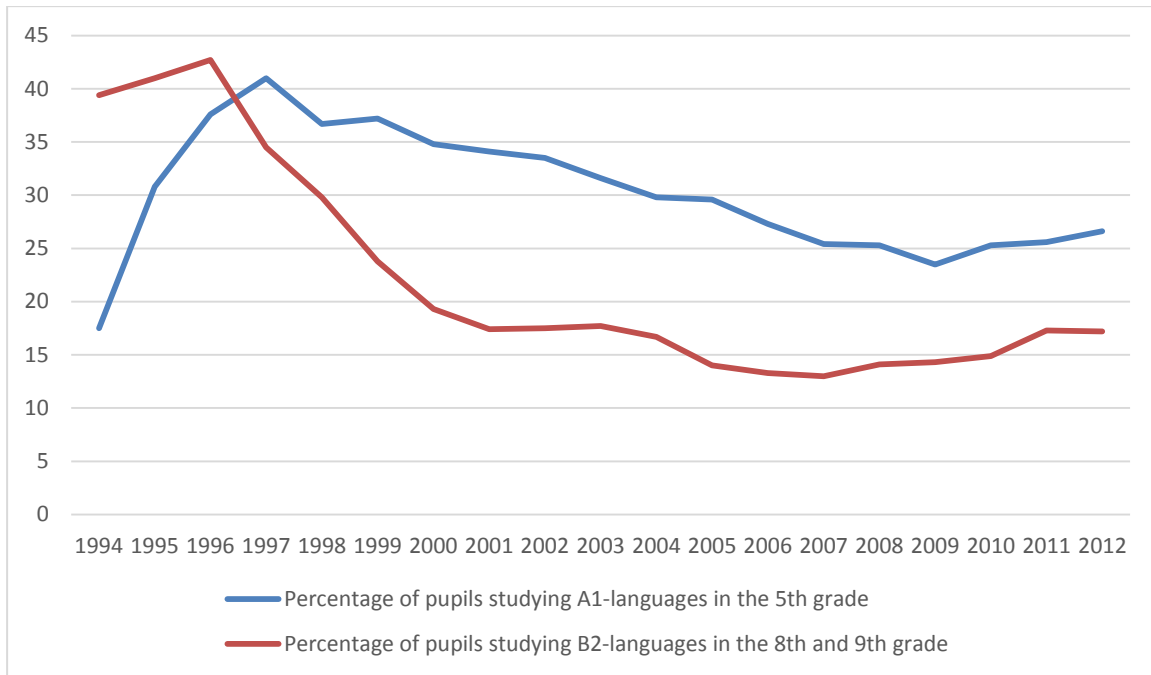
Figure 2 Popularity of elective language study

Foreign language study is troubled by the dominance of English. The statistics by OPH (2014: 44) and Kangasvieri et al. (2011: 9) show that English has for the past few decades maintained its position as the dominant foreign language. Every nine out of ten pupils in grade three learn the language as an A1-language, the first compulsory foreign language. Kangasvieri et al. (2011: 9) further demonstrate that English has to a large extent become the only option for the first compulsory foreign language. Only 34 Finnish-speaking municipalities had groups in any other language as A1 in 2009. English has maintained its status in a situation where the rest of the foreign language education is in decline. Sajavaara et al. (2007: 32) suggest that this development has led to the Finnish foreign language proficiency becoming deeper but narrower. They base their observations on a study conducted by The Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALS) at the turn of the millennium, where there appeared to be a generational gap between the language proficiency of civil servants. More recently, Leppänen et al. (2008) argue that English has become a part of daily communication in various contexts to a vast number of Finns.

Foreign language study struggles with regional inequality. The size and geographic location of the municipality often affect the opportunities to study foreign languages.

In his research Nyyssölä (2009b: 60) discovered that two groups of regions stand out geographically. The regions where the popularity of language study is higher than average include central Ostrobothnia and parts of Uusimaa. Yet, it should not be forgotten that these regions usually have a relatively large Swedish speaking population, which partially explains the tendency towards language study as Swedish speaking schools have a different language program. In contrast, there are regions where the popularity of language study is below average. These regions are exemplified by parts of Eastern Finland such as Northern and Southern Savonia. The regional differences are more pronounced in A2-languages in comparison to B2-languages (Nyyssölä 2009b: 54-55; Kangasvieri et al. 2011: 23).

Besides geographic location, the possibilities to study foreign languages are also influenced by the size of the municipality. OKM (2010: 121) report great variation in language programs that is related to the size of the municipality. As discussed above, related to the dominance of English, only the biggest municipalities offer a choice in the first foreign language. When it comes to elective foreign languages, Nyyssölä (2009b) suggests that there are differences between types of municipalities. In 2006 A2-languages were the most popular in urban municipalities (33.2 percent of 5th grade pupils studied an A2-language) and the least popular in rural municipalities (15.2 percent). In semi-urban municipalities the percentage was 19.1. B2-language study shows less variation between types of municipalities. It is slightly more popular in semi-urban municipalities and slightly less popular in urban municipalities than other types of municipalities based on the percentage of 8th and 9th graders learning a B2-language.

2.6 Approaching problems in foreign language education through statistics

Statistical information on various factors that are connected to the supply of foreign languages can be employed to provide insight on the decline of foreign language study. With statistical information, it is possible to characterize the conditions that are beneficial or detrimental to the organization of language education. Based on

Kangasvieri et al. (2010: 21) and Nyyssölä and Jakku-Sihvonen (2009: 216) a list of factors that affect the supply of foreign languages could include

- the size of the school,

- the population structure of the municipality,

- degree of urbanization,

- the financial situation of the municipality.

Through the list above, this chapter reflects on some of the implications and controversies presented by statistical information.

The size of the school and the size of the Finnish school network, factors that are related, are both integral aspects of the supply of foreign languages. Nyyssölä points out (2009a: 206) that the increase in the average size of the school contributes towards a higher possibility of the study of particularly A2-languages in a municipality. If bigger schools generally mean more language education on a municipal level, it should be revealing to see how the school network has developed in the recent years. The statistics utilized by the Finnish National Board of Education (OPH 2014: 39) show that in 2012, schools with less than a hundred pupils were the largest group within the Finnish school network. Such schools add up to almost half of the network with 43 percent, but only contain 11 percent of the student population. In contrast, big schools with over 300 pupils form 23 percent of the network and provide basic education for more than half of the student population (53%). Between 2008 and 2012 only the number of schools with more than 500 pupils has increased while the number of all schools smaller than this has decreased. In this time period more than a tenth of Finnish schools have seized to exist, which translates to 387 schools, among which schools with less than fifty pupils have been hit the hardest. Although the process of diminishing the school network has slowed down between 2008 and 2012 with fewer school closures annually, the trend of replacing small school with bigger units is quite clear in the 21st century. This development has led to a situation where there is only one school in some municipalities. (OPH 2014: 39-41).

In his analysis, Nyyssölä (2009a: 204) combines the factors of school size, population structure, degree of urbanization, and financial situation of the municipality. He suggests that certain characteristics either increase or decrease the costs of education. His analysis reveals that small schools, a small population density, and a big proportion of senior citizens increase the price of education. In contrast, an increase in the number of pupils, degree of urbanization, and tax revenue reduce the price. In other words, education is at its most affordable in densely populated urban municipalities where the population structure leans towards employed adults and children in the basic education age bracket. Juva et al. (2009: 69) illustrate that municipalities struggle financially in areas where tax revenue is cut by an aging population, a weak economic dependency ratio and emigration. This conclusion seems to be in line with the findings of the National Board of Education, who confirmed that the size of the municipality affects the language programs of municipalities (OKM 2010: 120). For international perspective, in 2008 the Center for Applied Linguistics in the United States surveyed thousands of American public and private schools on the organization of foreign language teaching. While the educational systems of Finland and the United States differ considerably, the results of the survey still point to the same direction as its Finnish equivalents. In their report Pufahl and Rhodes (2011: 272, 275) conclude that rural schools and schools with a low socio-economic status (measured though the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch) were less likely to offer foreign language education compared to other schools. The municipalities where the criteria for affordable education in general are met, all in all, seem to be also the municipalities where language education stands the best chance, but there are some complications.

There seems to be an overlap between the type of municipality where the price of education is affordable and the type where language education is at its strongest, but the statistics do not support the idea that language education is directly connected to the costs of education. Nyyssölä (2009a: 209) suggests that especially the organization of B2-language teaching reveals real variation between municipalities. On a larger scale, regional level differences begin to portray regular features. Yet, while the

organization of B2-language education clearly sets municipalities apart, it appears to be curiously somewhat independent of the factors of educational supply, economy, population structure or location. Statistics, therefore, offer limited explanation for the differences between municipalities in organization of B2-languages and do not show a clear correlation with the cost of education. The organization of A2-languages also differentiates municipalities and is, in contrast to B2-languages, connected to the size of the school and the school network. Yet, from a financial point of view, the organization of A2-language is even more debatable. The results of research presented by Aaltonen et al. (2007: 38) suggest that the presence or lack of A2-language in language programs does not explain the differences in the cost of education between municipalities. Nevertheless, the financial situation of a municipality is often used as an argument for or against the organization of A2-langauge education. In a survey done by Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b: 4) municipal decision makers explain that the supply of foreign languages very often depends on the financial situation in the municipality. As an example, in Savonlinna, an urban municipality in South-Eastern Finland, the plan to completely remove the supply of A2-languages was based on financial arguments (Hänninen 2012). All in all, from a cost-of-education perspective, the statistics do not explain the cuts in foreign language education done in municipalities.

As the organization of language study does not seem to affect the costs of education and average school size has become bigger over time, the statistics cannot completely explain why language study is in the decline. On the national level, the trends of the school size and elective language study are in contrast with each other. The number of Finnish municipalities has decreased rapidly in the recent years (Suomen Kuntaliitto 2013). There are many municipalities with only one school, and big schools are not only exclusive to the bigger, urban municipalities (OPH 2014: 41). While there is a shown correlation (Nyyssölä 2009a) between the average school size and the study of elective languages, it does not seem that the development of the Finnish school network towards bigger units has favored language study. As shown in the chapter exposing present challenges in language education (chapter 2.5), quite

the opposite seems to be true with language study in decline. The average size of the school is a major indicator for both the study of particularly A2-languages and the costs of education, but language study and the costs are not clearly connected in regard to either A2- or B2-languages.

In conclusion, the analysis of the statistical information on the factors that affect the supply of foreign languages offers a valuable perspective on the circumstances that are beneficial or detrimental for the organization of language education, but it is not enough. The factors that affect educational supply are interconnected and it is difficult to draw straightforward conclusions. Certain features of municipalities appear to be beneficial for the organization of foreign language teaching, such as big schools, a vast number of pupils, high tax revenue, and a high population density. Yet, the lines between municipalities and schools that do or do not offer elective language teaching cannot be drawn based on such factors alone. It is also curious that the impact that language education has on the costs of education in a municipality seems to be vague at best and that the trend towards bigger schools has not positively affected the downward trend of foreign language study. Nyyssölä (2009a: 209) admits that behind the regional differences there may qualitative factors that are inaccessible through statistical data.

2.7 Role of individual decision makers

Individual decision makers form a major qualitative factor that affects the organization of language education. Their increased influence to shape the local level language teaching policies of municipalities and schools is discussed in chapter 2.3. Hämäläinen et al. (2007: 65-66) suggest that the size or the financial situation of the municipality do not always explain the narrow language selection. They claim that the will of the decision makers and their understanding of language study is the key. Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b: 7) confirm this point of view and argue that an individual principal, civil servant or a member of the municipal board of education can influence the local attitude towards language teaching policies and the

development of language teaching through their own attitudes and views. As there have not been many studies performed on the topic, at least in the Finnish context, this chapter discusses the role of individual decision makers mainly through the research done by Kyllönen and Saarinen.

In their research, Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b) found indications that individuals who have power to influence the organization of language teaching are to an extent unaware of their role. Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b) interviewed sixteen members of the municipal board of education in two municipalities that had recently gone through a consolidation process where multiple municipalities were joined together. Beside the board members, they also interviewed civil servants and principals. In their interviews they found that language education does not seem to be among the central aspects to be developed in municipalities. The local level decision makers were inactive in regards to the contents of language programs. They, however, stated that offering a wide range of languages is detrimental to the realization of language groups, but did not want to limit the array of languages offered. Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b: 7) discovered some differences in the attitudes towards the downward trend of foreign language teaching. In smaller municipalities there were attempts to solve the issues within the municipalities, while the big municipalities looked for reasons and solutions from outside of the municipality. All in all, Kyllönen and Saarinen found that language teaching was not seen prominent in the field of education by the decision makers. The basics of organizing education in a municipality, such as resources, group sizes, and transportation to and from school, occupied a more central role. The conclusion of the researchers is that language teaching policies are not consciously shaped in municipalities despite the possibilities offered by decentralized decision making.

Even if the individuals interviewed by Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b) did not regard their role in shaping language teaching as particularly important, they still were opinionated on their possibilities to influence language teaching. Municipal finances were seen as a major factor governing decisions and actions. Some principals felt that

money is a key factor, whereas others felt that they could operate freely and create small language groups or shared groups between schools, despite of financial constraints. The civil servants highlighted the influence of money even more. In their view everything was ultimately about money, whether in a positive or negative sense. The board members also admitted that despite of other reasons to form language groups the decision is ultimately dictated by the municipal financial situation. (Kyllönen and Saarinen 2010b: 4-5.) It needs to be kept in mind that the financial reality of most municipalities was not as dire at time of the interviews as it is at the time of the present study. Statistics Finland (2013) report that 2012 was financially the worst year for municipalities since 2005 with a considerable decrease in the annual surplus. The increase of tax revenue was low and the volume of loans was increased (See more: Miettinen (2014)). Thus, the importance of municipal financial situation might be even more pronounced at present.

The matter of finances was constantly present in the interviews by Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b), but the interviewees approached the issue of organizing language teaching from an angle that stressed the role of the individual as well. The principals discussed the importance of the ability to innovate and the will to employ new ways of organizing language teaching. They suggested various concrete means to improve the situation of language teaching, which included short courses, the promotion of foreign languages to pupils through fairs and booklets on elective subjects, the possibilities of hiring language teachers with unorthodox subject combinations, and new methods that are based on information technology. Saarinen and Kyllönen (2010b) also found that it depended on the principal whether they saw various projects as a resource or a strain. In addition, the principals placed a varying amount of importance on the possibility to be able to develop language education in their position. The civil servants in turn brought up a national point of view that is based on the curriculum and the distribution of lesson hours. Yet, they also had their own views of organizing education on a municipal level, some of which very strategic and some based on the pupils' perspective. (Kyllönen and Saarinen 2010b: 5). Overall, although not much research has been done on the topic and language education

appears not to be particularly high in the hierarchy of issues, decision makers, civil servants, and principals seem to have some ideas regarding their role in the organization of language teaching. Moreover, according to Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b), some individuals also had concrete propositions on how to improve the organization of language teaching.

As a conclusion Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b: 7) argue that despite the limited finances of municipalities, it is possible to develop new and innovative solutions in language education, if there is the will. The researchers suggest that by providing municipal decision makers with education and by communication from the citizens of the municipality, it could be possible to make decision makers aware of their role in the decisions regarding language education. Thus, it would be possible to influence the development of foreign language teaching positively and increase positive attitudes towards languages in general.

2.8 Top-down projects

The plight of foreign language education has been acknowledged. There have been multiple efforts to improve the situation of foreign language education by national level actors, such as the National Board of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture. In this chapter, two major top-down projects funded by national level actors will be presented and their shortcomings as indicated in the project reports will be discussed. The projects included are *KIMMOKE* and *Kielitivoli I*, which both were designed to diversify foreign language education and improve the quality of teaching. Due to the scope of the present study, the main interest lies in the shortcomings related to the supply aspects of foreign language teaching and the role of individual decision makers and principals.

The first national, top-down project to be discussed is the *KIMMOKE* project that was active between 1996 and 2001 (Kangasvieri et al. 2011: 26). The scale of the project was big, as it included 275 schools of various types and levels spread across the

country (OPH 2001: 10). The final report of the project (OPH 2001: 9) defined the goals of the project and evaluated the extent to which they had been reached. The goals of the project were to diversify the study of foreign languages and to improve the level of foreign language teaching and learning. The study of elective languages such as Russian, French, German, and Spanish was to be made more popular without affecting the study English and Swedish.

In the report (OPH 2001: 34-38) it was assessed that the goals set for the project were partially reached. The array of languages studied in participating schools widened slightly and, in total, the study of A2-language increased noticeably at first, but shifted into a decline towards the end of the project. At the end, it was still not possible to study an A2-language in every participating municipality and the study of B2-languages decreased during the project lifetime. As in basic education, upper secondary schools did not manage to reach the quantitative goals set for them. The final report summarizes how the participating municipalities reacted to the results. The municipalities argued that the wider array of language offered had a negative impact on the formation of groups due to increased choice and spread. If no A2-language was offered, the municipalities referred to the lack of resources and the doubt that pupils would continue the study of the selected elective language in middle school as reasons. The continuity of language paths appeared to be unreliable due to fluctuating availability of qualified teachers. The final report indicates a lack of general planning on the municipal level. As plans for the future at the time, the municipalities stressed the importance of ensuring and expanding the study of A2-languge. Language clubs and long-distance teaching were considered as example means to reach these goals. The final report suggests that, on the one hand, there are many small elementary schools that lack the resources to provide any A2-language teaching at all. On the other hand, some small schools offer such a wide array of elective languages that there can only be a group in the most popular one at best. In addition, there are schools who decidedly do not offer any A2-languages, pleading their lack of finances. (OPH 2001: 34-38).

Kielitivoli I is the second national top-down project discussed in this study. As the *KIMMOKE* project and a smaller scale follow up failed to provide positive long-term results in foreign language study in the 21st century, the National Board of Education launched another project (Tuokko et al. 2012: 16-17). *Kielitivoli I* project was active between 2009 and 2011 and was followed up by *Kielitivoli II* that ended in 2013 (OPH 2013). The goals and the geographical spread of the participating municipalities were similar to the *KIMMOKE* project. More than to simply estimate whether the goals of the project were reached or not, the final report of the project (Tuokko et al. 2012: 64-65) provides insight on the factors that either helped the participating municipalities to reach their goals or hindered them. The contact persons in the municipal administrations considered an enthusiastic and efficient coordinator and the enthusiasm of the steering group (which usually consisted of a foreign language teacher and a municipal educational administrative representative) as the most important factor for success. Adequate project funding was regarded as the second most important factor. The relatively non-restricted usage of the funding enabled the possibility to create models that suit particular local conditions. As the number one factor hindering success, the contact persons reported the negative attitudes towards the project or foreign language study in general. The attitudes stemmed from schools, parents, or the municipal board of education. In some cases the principals of the schools were considered to be unwilling to broaden the array of languages offered in a school because of either negative personal attitudes or practical reasons, such as creating timetables. In addition, municipal decisions may have prevented the introduction or re-introduction of A2-languages into the school curriculum.

It might still be premature to make definitive conclusions about the long term success of the *Kielitivoli* project as the second phase only ended in 2013, but as discussed in an chapter 2.5, the plight of foreign language education has not eased. As the difficulties of the two projects are examined, one of the key issues seems to be the indifferent or even negative attitudes that the projects or foreign language study in general faced. When it comes to large-scale projects, it seems that individuals have a lot of effect on the local level, whether positive or negative. A summary by

Kangasvieri et al. (2011: 29) suggests the low engagement of the teaching personnel, lack of time, insufficient funding, municipal attempts to create savings, and lack of support from the school community as some of the reasons for the shortcomings shared by many national, top-down projects.

2.9 Bottom-up reorganization of foreign language teaching

Beside the national, large-scale projects, there are also local, bottom-up attempts to improve the situation of language education. Local solutions have been enabled by the fact, as Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b) point out, that an increasing number of concrete decisions regarding education are being made on the local level. The scope of reform varies from simply concentrating elective foreign language study to one school to total reorganization of municipal language programs. As municipalities are struggling financially (see: Statistics Finland 2013; Suomen Kuntaliitto 2015) and cannot depend on the bigger, top-down, government-funded projects, the importance of new local ways of organizing language teaching becomes more pronounced. This chapter will present a few examples of ways municipalities have dealt with the decline of foreign language education.

Distance teaching has been one of the ways to form groups despite of geographical separation and group size requirements in the 21st century. A report by the National Board of Education (OPH 2011: 52) defines distance teaching as a form of teaching where the pupils and the teacher are not physically in the same space. It is usually done over the internet with the help of information technology. The report (OPH 2011: 53) argues that distance teaching increases regional equality in education. One of the most common applications of the distance teaching technology has been the organization of foreign language teaching in small schools where it would be difficult due to lack of teacher and financial resources. The method has been mostly employed in secondary and adult education, but there have also been distance teaching projects in basic education. For example in the Turku area distance teaching

has enabled the study of elective foreign languages in small schools in the archipelago (OPH 2001: 115).

Over time many municipalities have shown creativity in the ways they have attempted to overcome the limitations of teacher and financial resources without extensive use of information technology. The final report of the *KIMMOKE* project (OPH 2001: 115-116) presents us with some examples of the variety of ways foreign language education can be reorganized to meet local demands and challenges. In Sodankylä, northern Finland, pupils who study an A2-language in small rural schools spend one day per week in a centrally located school. This concentration of pupils secures sufficient group sizes not only in elective foreign languages, but also in other subjects that do not have teachers readily available in rural schools. Somewhat similarly pupils in Hämeenkyrö have been transported by buses and taxis to schools where certain A2-languages have been selected the most. In contrast to solutions by smaller municipalities, some bigger cities have begun A2-language teaching in the 4th grade already. It has been argued that this arrangement enables the combination of A1 and A2 language groups in middle school. Compared to the ways listed above, the city of Kotka had taken a completely different path and limited the choice of elective foreign language to Russian only. Such a compromise ensures that the group size requirements are met at the cost of a narrow selection.

To provide a more in-depth example of the ways foreign language education can be reorganized, I will present a model initially created in the rural municipality of Karstula, central Finland. There are multiple reasons to why the model serves well as an example. First, it has received some positive publicity. In 2009 the model was awarded by SUKOL, the Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland, as it was considered a good method for maintaining elective foreign language teaching in a small upper secondary school (SUKOL 2014). Early in 2015 the Minister of Education and Culture at the time visited the school and used it as an example of a small school that is doing well (Seppälä 2015). Second, the model was initiated bottom-up by an active individual in a position of power, the principal of the upper

secondary school. Third, the model was not a result of a government-funded project and therefore, did not rely on outside funding. Fourth, the model also displays versatility with connections to the private businesses and other educational institutions. Beside pupils, it is possible for adult learners in the community college to take part in the teaching. Elective language teaching is organized in the model as following: The languages are offered in the cycle of two years. One year the selection consists of French and Russian, the next of German and Spanish. Unlike in most upper secondary schools, the courses in an elective language are fitted in a timeframe of two years, instead of three. This enables pupils to study two languages in the course of three years in upper secondary school. The groups consist of first-year and second-year pupils with the addition of adult learners. Thus, it is possible for the small upper secondary school to maintain a comprehensive foreign language program. (Puustinen 2009).

All in all, the topics and issues presented above in chapter two form the basis for the present study. The decentralization of educational decision making has provided the local level administrators with more influence to shape foreign language teaching and related policies. After many phases, foreign language teaching in Finland still struggles with some issues related to the dominance of English and regional inequality. As statistics discussed in this chapter have been unable to fully account for the issues, it is relevant to analyze the role of the individual administrators which has been suggested to be of high importance for the organization of language education. This chapter also presented some concrete examples of how the problems in Finnish foreign language education have been attempted to resolve through bottom-up and top-down means. Based on the information of this background chapter, a research design has been developed. This research design is presented in the following chapter.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN: INTERVIEWS WITH ADMINISTRATORS

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research design. In chapter 3.1 the research questions and the rationale behind them are defined. Chapter 3.2 presents the theory behind the data collection and the concrete process of collecting data. The chapter also introduces the participants of the present study. Finally, chapter 3.3 provides information on the methods of analysis and a summary of the analysis process.

3.1 The research questions

As previously established, the educational decision-making process has become increasingly decentralized in the decades following the comprehensive school reform of the 1970s (see for instance: Laukkanen 1998; OKM 2010, Nyyssölä 2009). As a result, the role of the individuals in educational administration both on the municipal and school level has gained more importance (Kyllönen and Saarinen 2010b, Jakku-Sihvonen 2009, Sajavaara et al. 2007). When it comes to language education, the opportunities to study languages vary between regions and types of municipalities (see for instance: Nyyssölä 2009b, Kangasvieri et al. 2011, OKM 2010). On top of this, language study in general has evidently been in decline since the late 1990s (see for instance: SUKOL 2009, OPH 2014, Kangasvieri et al. 2011). Major top-down projects intended to improve the situation have only yielded temporary and limited results (OPH 2001, Tuokko et al. 2012). In the current situation, it seems to be justified to investigate how individuals in local and school level educational administration feel about different aspects of the organization and development of language education. In the present study the focus is on the administrators' views on some of the most concrete ways of developing the organization of language education. The particular aspects that are focused on are development projects, local reorganization of language teaching, and communication and cooperation. Regarding these aspects, the present study attempts to illustrate what local level administrators consider beneficial or detrimental from the point of view of the

development of the organization of language education.   The present study also attempts to provide information on what kind of a role the interviewed administrators themselves appear to have towards the aspects of developing the organization of language education that were listed above. The following research questions form the basis for the present study:

- Which aspects of development projects, local reorganization of language education, and communication and cooperation do the local level administrators consider beneficial from the point of view of the development of the organization of language education?   And which detrimental? What kind of improvements do they suggest?

- Do the local level administrators themselves appear active, passive, or reactive towards development projects, local reorganization of language education, and communication and cooperation? What reasons do they suggest for their stances?

Through the research questions, the present study attempts to provide insight on some of the issues that local level administrators face in the process of organizing and developing language education in an environment of decentralized decision making. By providing both up- and downsides to concrete ways of developing the organization of language education and illustrating what kinds of stances the local level administrators themselves personally display towards them, the present study also suggests ways in which the local level development of the organization of language education could be supported.

3.2 Data collection

This chapter will provide an overview of the interview as a method for data collection and reasons for selecting the method for the present study. After this, the differences between the main types of interviews and the features of the semi-

structured interview method selected for the present study will be briefly explained. The data for the present study was collected through a series of interviews. The interview as a method of data collection was selected for multiple reasons. First, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 41) explain that through the method the researcher attempts to portray the thoughts, views, experiences, and emotions of the interviewee. Dufva (2011: 132) expands the previous list with attitudes and values. Thus, the method provides information that is relevant to answering the research questions presented in the previous chapter. Second, as Ruusuvuori and Tiittula (2005: 12-13) suggest, the method is built on the assumption that the interviewer and the interviewee both actively shape the outcome of the interview. The interviewee has the opportunity to present issues relevant to them as freely as possible (Hirsjärvi and Hurme, 2008: 35). Third, Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 35) explain that the method is suitable for obtaining information on a topic that has been little researched. As such the method suits the present study well.

The interview as a method can be further subdivided. According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 43), the differences can largely be attributed to the degree of structure: where the interview is positioned on a spectrum of structured and unstructured interviews. In other words, whether the questions in an interview are exact and pre-defined, and to what extent the interviewer directs the course of the interview. In between the unstructured and structured ends of the spectrum, there is a variety of types of semi-structured interview. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 47) explain that in these types of interview some, but not all of their features have been predefined. The method employed in the present study is a type of semi-structured interview sometimes referred to as focused interview. The themes of the interview remain the same, but the exact formatting and order of the questions may vary within a series of interviews (Ruusuvuori and Tiittula 2005: 11). Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 48) suggest that such setting shifts the focus from the interviewer to the interviewee. The method takes into account that the interpretations and meanings created by the interviewees are crucial.

3.2.1 Data collection process

The data was collected in two municipalities during early 2016. To guarantee the anonymity of the participants, the municipalities are referred to as Rural-M and Urban-M throughout the present study. According to Tilastokeskus (2015a) one, Rural-M, is classified as a rural municipality and the other, Urban-M, as an urban municipality (the classifications summarized at the end of chapter 2.1. According to previous studies, the type of municipality influences the language programs (see for instance: OKM 2010, Nyyssölä 2009b). Geographically Rural-M is located in Central Finland and Urban-M in Southern Savonia. Nyyssölä (2009b: 60) suggests that statistically Southern Savonia is among the regions where the popularity of language study is below the national average. The participants interviewed include the head of local education department from both Rural-M and Urban-M and two heads of school working in basic education from each municipality, which makes six interviewees in total. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000: 142) point out that the interview method does not attempt to reach generalizations, and therefore as Dufva (2011: 134) suggests a small number of interviewees is often sufficient.

The interviews were conducted in Finnish at the participants' place of work. All participants spoke Finnish as their first language and conducted their work mostly in Finnish as well. Thus, as a language for the interviews, Finnish allowed the participants to express themselves most naturally and exactly. The participants were interviewed individually and the duration of each interview was roughly one hour. The topics of each interview were the same, but due to the nature of the semi-structured interview method, the extent to which each of the topics was covered varied depending on the input of the interviewee. The interview structure for the present study is included in the appendix. The interviews were recorded. As Ruusuvuori and Tiittula (2005: 14) explain, recordings of the data make it possible to revisit the interview situation in order to avoid misinterpretations. Revisiting the interview can also reveal new information and subtleties that might have been missed the first time. The interviews for the present study were recorded with

multiple audio devices to ensure a successful recording in the case of equipment malfunction.

3.2.2 Participants

Altogether six people were interviewed for the present study. The head of the local education department was interviewed from both Rural-M and Urban-M. In Rural-M, the head of the local education department also holds a position as the principal of the upper secondary school. In addition, a principal and a teacher working as the head of a school were interviewed from Rural-M, and two principals from Urban-M. The principals and the teacher all work in basic education. Basic information about the participants is summarized in the table below. The names of the interviewees have been replaced by pseudonyms to guarantee anonymity. The table presents information about the municipality and position in the local educational administration of the interviewees.

Table 2 Participants

Pseudonym	Municipality	Position
Anne	Rural-M	Head of local education department; upper secondary school principal
Johanna	Rural-M	Principal
Reetta	Rural-M	Teacher; head of school
Suvi	Urban-M	Head of local education department
Veikko	Urban-M	Principal
Lauri	Urban-M	Principal

3.3 Methods of analysis

The data of the present study is analyzed through qualitative means. The nature of the research questions and the amount of data support a qualitative approach. The present study employs data oriented content analysis. Data oriented analysis, as

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2011: 95) explain, attempts to build a theoretical whole out of the data. The key is that the units of analysis are not preset, but stem from the data. Content analysis, as summarized by Patton (2002: 453), attempts to identify patterns and themes within a text. These recurring words and themes can be called core meanings. Yet, Ruusuvuori et al. (2010: 19) argue that content analysis is more than the process of classifying and organizing the data. Miles and Huberman (1994: 10-12) define analysis as a set of three activities that take place continuously and cyclically, instead of linear progression. *Data reduction* is the process where the data is focused, simplified, abstracted, and transformed. Thus, Patton's definition above would fall into this category. Next, *data display* is the process where the information is compressed and organized into a compact, easily accessible form, such as graphs, charts, and networks. Finally, the third process of the analysis is *conclusion drawing and verification*. This process includes the attempt to make sense of the patterns and themes, and to verify the conclusions.

The present study draws from the research approach called phenomenography. Limberg (2008: 611-612) defines the object of phenomenography as "the variation of human experience in the world". The approach, therefore, puts the focus on the individual and their ways of experiencing a certain phenomenon. For example, the present study examines which aspects of various tools associated with the development of the organization of language education do the local-level administrators experience as beneficial and detrimental. Such questions, according to Limberg (2008: 612), reflect the *second-order perspective*, which could be summarized as the focus not on the world as such, but on "the phenomenon as it appears to a number of people". When it comes to the process of analysis, phenomenography deals with themes emerging from the material through several steps that begin with the data collection and transcription (Limberg 2008: 613).

The present study does not, however, fully adhere to the conventions of phenomenography and data oriented content analysis, but instead also employs some categories related to the theory of social action. The combination of approaches

is not new. For example Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2011: 165) promote the idea of drawing from multiple research approaches and argue that this is also the trend of science at large. Patton (2002: 433), in turn, suggests that since each qualitative study is unique, the analytical approach used will be unique. In the present study another approach is used to assist with the organization and structuring of the data. Similar to Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010a: 15), the theory of social action is employed as a basis for the categorization. Van Leeuwen (2008: 33) and Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010a: 20) provide a basis for the categories, in which the experiences of the local-level administrators are organized in terms of social action:

- *active.* The social actors are represented as dynamic forces.
- *passive.* The social actors are represented as undergoing an activity.
- *reactive.* The social actors are represented as reacting to external forces and demands.

The present study focuses on the experiences of municipal decision makers and principals in regard to their role in the organization of foreign language teaching. The categories presented above are useful, since the background literature suggests that language teaching policies are shaped on multiple levels by many different actors. In such a fragmented setting of decision making, it is interesting to see if the administrators view their role as active, passive, or reactive in relation to various aspects of local-level development of the organization of foreign language education.

The data collected through interviews (as explained in chapter 3.2) is the basis of the analysis of the present study. This type of data is typical in phenomenographic research (Limberg 2008: 612). However, as Miles and Huberman (1994: 9) explain, such data is not as such accessible for analysis. The recordings need to be transcribed first. Ruusuvuori et al. (2010: 13-14; 427) explain that through transcribing, the data that is collected through recordings is transformed into a form that is more manageable. They suggest that it is typical to use the transcribed version of the data as the basis for the analysis, as it is difficult to conceive larger themes through simply listening to the recordings. The level of detail of a transcript, as explained by Ruusuvuori et al. (2010: 424), depends on the research questions and methodological

approach. Limberg (2008: 613) explains that interviews for phenomenographic research are generally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Such an approach was employed by the present study as well.

After the data was transcribed, the analysis loosely followed the flows of activity described by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2011). The first step was data reduction, where noteworthy utterances of the participants were coded into keywords and simplified phrases.   This activity, according to Miles and Huberman (1994: 10), makes the data more manageable through sharpening, sorting, focusing, discarding, and organizing the data. As the second step, a data display in the form a drawn network was created. The keywords and simplified phrases across all interviews were placed in the network; Ones that were considered as closely connected were grouped closer together on paper, and lines were drawn between the nodes of the network to show interconnectedness. Miles and Huberman (1994: 10) explain that the purpose of data displays is to organize information into a form that is immediately accessible and compact.   The third step was to cluster information presented in the data display into categories and organize them in linear text form. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2011: 110) the clustering process further condenses the data. As the fourth step, the data was organized under wider themes which included multiple categories. The information that was considered as less connected to the themes was discarded. Thus, this activity could be seen as the second phase of data reduction in the present study. Finally, the information organized under themes was written out as a linear text accompanied by extracts from the transcripts. This flow of activity could be referred to as conclusion drawing (Miles and Huberman 1994:11).

4 LOCAL LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS' VIEWS ON VARIOUS TOOLS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

This chapter contains the analysis of the key findings that emerged from the interview data. The findings are organized under each of the three aspects of the development of organization of language education that were established in the previous chapter: Chapter 4.1 deals with top-down funded development projects. Chapter 4.2 discusses the bottom-up ways of reorganizing language education within a school or municipality. Finally, chapter 4.3 focuses on communication and cooperation between different actors on various levels of administration. The chapter displays local level administrators' more general views on the up- and downsides of the different tools and attempts to characterize their personal stance towards them alongside each other. In other words, the chapter provides answers to both research questions side by side.

To a large extent, this chapter presents the views of the interviewed local level administrators indirectly, but also employs some direct quotes from the interviewees. The purpose of these direct quotes is to provide the readers a glimpse of how the various interviewees expressed themselves in their own words. The quotes also give the readers an idea of how the analysis was crafted, as the quotes are the closest the readers get to the actual interview data. Thus, the purpose of the quotes is not to increase the reliability of the analysis, which according to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2011: 22) cannot be achieved. The interviews were conducted in Finnish and the quotes in this chapter are presented in the original language, followed by an English translation in italics. The quotes are visually clearly separated from the rest of the analysis: they are indented, numbered and printed in smaller font size. The language of the quotes has been altered in the way that some of the local and colloquial expressions and filler words have been removed. This has been done to protect the anonymity of the interviewees.

4.1 Development projects

Views expressed by Suvi demonstrate that decisions to participate in projects may be influenced by input provided by national, local and school level actors. She had an analytical approach to selecting the projects to participate in and an active role in the application process. Yet, she also clearly expressed the importance of the school level expertise. Suvi explained that she actively follows the information provided by the National Board of Education and the ministry of education. It is a statement that well exemplifies the shift towards guidance of educational decision making through information, which allows individual local-level decision makers to shape local teaching policies more freely (as explained in chapter 2.3)). According to Suvi, the decision to apply for project funding often depends on whether the project was considered to meet the development needs of the municipality. The basis for the decision lies in the strategy of the municipality, the national core curricula, and legislation. Thus, (as explained in chapter 2.3) while the central government agencies and national legislation still are important, municipalities currently have wide opportunities to specialize and display their own characteristics. As the head of education, Suvi considered herself as ultimately responsible for projects and that she should possess the necessary information regarding them. Nevertheless, she did not manage projects alone. She explained how she works with the development manager, a board of principals (*rehtorikokous*), and steering groups that include principals and language teachers. She highlighted the importance of networks and knowing the needs of schools. The importance of the school level was apparent as Suvi explained that she both actively consults the schools and receives suggestions of projects in which to participate without asking. To Suvi, the language teachers also represented the expertise in the projects, and thus they claimed a part of her responsibility. One should notice that Suvi both actively followed the information provided by national, local and school level actors, to inform her decisions of project participation and educational development. Thus, whereas the background literature suggests that it depends on the principal whether various projects are considered a

resource or a strain, the example of Suvi, a head of education, shows that the decisions may be influenced by a wide variety of actors on different levels.

Individual active teachers were widely perceived as important among the interviewees, but the role of the administrators themselves often appeared secondary. Despite being from different types of municipalities, both Lauri in Urban-M and Anne in Rural-M discussed language teachers who are responsible for running the international projects in their schools. Anne explained that they participated in the international project because a language teacher had participated in a similar project in their previous place of employment and was enthusiastic about project work. This teacher was responsible for most of the paperwork related to the project, such as applications and reports. Anne argued that beside an excited teacher, there needs to be a principal or a head of education who is not against participating. This argument supports the view presented in chapter 2.8, where negative attitudes towards a project or foreign language study in general were considered as the main detrimental factor in regards to projects. An extract from the interview of Veikko (Urban-M) manages to illustrate the pattern that the administrators seem to consider typical for participating in a project.

(1)
V: -- kielten opettaja on ollu tietysti yks semmonen hyvin innokas siinä asiassa ja sit jostakin löytyy aina joku semmonen hanke, että jotkut kiinnostuu, että hei, meidän luokka lähtee tuohon projektiin mukaan. Ei muuta ku pannaan rumpu soimaan ja lähdetään.
V: -- (the) language teacher has of course been very enthusiastic about it, and there are always projects that interest people, like hey, our class will participate in that project. Then let's just get the show on the road without further ado.

In the extract above, Veikko voiced the idea that an enthusiastic teacher needs to actively take the initial step and administrators give their support to the project afterwards, but not initially. Thus, administrators perceived themselves in a secondary role. Reetta, head of a small elementary school in Rural-M, considered that there could be incentives offered from various levels of educational administration, but participation in projects is ultimately dependent on individual teachers. Two

principals from different municipalities, Lauri (Urban-M) and Johanna (Rural-M) both claimed to endorse participation in various projects, but stressed the importance of the individual teacher's enthusiasm. Thus, while they appeared to be positive in regards to projects, they actually took a somewhat passive stance and did not take responsibility for taking initiative. When it comes to major projects, chapter 2.8 also points out that the enthusiasm of the language teacher and municipal educational administrative representative, who usually for the steering group for the project, is one of the key factors for success.

Some of the main hindrances for participation in projects, as given by the local administrators, were the extensive paperwork and the excessive number of work hours required. The local administrators considered recruiting teachers for different projects as their responsibility to an extent. The perceived nature of development projects, however, makes the process of recruiting teachers and participation in general often difficult. From the local administrators' point of view, projects appeared bureaucratic. Administrators from both municipalities, Johanna (Rural-M) and Veikko (Urban-M) addressed similar issues. They both argued that projects require participating teachers to work countless extra hours in addition to their regular workload, and often, as Veikko added, the hours are not compensated to the teachers. An extract from the interview with Veikko illustrates that the cumbersome paperwork associated with applications and reports was the most commonly given reason for not participating in a project:

> (2)
> V: -- ei se [hankkeet] sen osalta vedä, että jos opettajat joutuvat tekemään hirveät määrät selvityksiä ja selostuksia. Ensin suunnitelmia siitä miten aiotaan tehdä, sitten toteutuksen jälkeen raportteja siitä miten ne on hommat tehty.
> *V: -- it [projects] doesn't work if the teachers have to provide masses of reports and accounts. First, plans explaining how things will be done, followed by reports on how things were ultimately executed.*

In the extract above, Veikko explained that paperwork is divided between the phases of the project and includes plans, accounts, and reports. Johanna too spoke of preliminary work, explaining and accounting. In the worst case, Veikko explained,

the input (required work) and output (received resources) can be at such an imbalance that a teacher who once participates in a project decides not to participate again. This sentiment was also echoed by Lauri (Urban-M) who described a situation where the participants in an international project felt drained after the activities at the school were over. While Kangasvieri et al. (2011: 29) suggest that low engagement of the teaching personnel, lack of time, and lack of support from the school community were given as some of shortcomings shared by many top-down projects, the issues of bureaucracy and intensive workload requirements were not mentioned. It could even be speculated whether the issues expressed by the interviewees in the present study could represent causes of the shortcomings expressed in the background literature.

Bureaucracy and intensive workloads were not the only reasons for limited participation in projects. Some of the other reasons given in the interviews ranged from the personal to the national level. Anne in Rural-M considered her language proficiency inadequate for handling all the paperwork that is required by EU projects. Her stance on international projects was passive and it stemmed from her personal qualities: she accepted the fact that EU-projects require paperwork in English, but felt powerless on the personal level in the face of these requirements due to her own level of language proficiency. Veikko in Urban-M explained that their operations have been relocated and that their school has undergone various renovations for the past several years. This turmoil of physical space had, according to Veikko, drained the energies of the staff, and the current big task for the personnel was simply to manage the school amid all the changes. From an international visitor's point of view, Veikko also explained how the temporary structures used during renovations present an unfavorable image of Finnish schools. On these grounds he had turned down requests of international cooperation, although his school did participate in the EU initiated *Comenius* project earlier. His passive stance towards projects stemmed from renovations, an external force and a change in the physical environment to which he has been subjected. Lauri, Urban-M, has had negative experiences of international cooperation under a project:

(3)
L: -- Ei niistä kuulunut mitään. Kaatui ihan se hanke täysin sitten. Espanja ja me ja muut oli ihan kypsiä siihen, että he [koordinaattorit] vaan pelasivat yhden matkan itselleen ja se oli sitten siinä. Että vähän innostuskin lopahti, [ajattelin] että tämmöistäkö tämä nyt sitten on.
L: -- You didn't hear anything from them. The project completely fell through. Spain and us and whoever else was there were simply fed up with them [coordinators] for grabbing a trip for themselves, and that was it. So my enthusiasm was somewhat gone as well, [I thought] so is it like this then.

In the previous extract, Lauri explained that the coordinators from another country quit communication after they had first been on a sponsored trip to Finland. The project was subsequently in a standstill as no other country wanted to assume the workload of project coordination. Thus, the setback with the project influenced Lauri and his perception of international projects negatively. Although he was already a participant in the project, his stance towards it was passive as a result of the failure of project coordination. Besides the example of the international project, Lauri's general stance towards appeared passive as well. He suggested that the staff lacks enthusiasm due to lack of energy. The main reason for the development, he suggested, lies in a piece of legislation (Pupil and Student Welfare Act) that requires more measures to be taken to support individual pupils. He argued that the updated legislation has caused more work for people working in schools and that this work drains the enthusiasm of the personnel. Lauri's passive stance stemmed from the changes in national legislation that adds to the tasks of schools. He seemed to be undergoing the changes without the opportunity to influence them. As was explained in chapter 2.3, the role of regulation through nationally binding legislation has diminished over time, but Lauri's statement could be seen as a hint of present, on-going development towards greater central government control of education through legislation. Such conclusion would, however, require more time and data. The various reasons for the interviewees to have a passive stance on certain types projects, seems to be in line with the findings of Saarinen and Kyllönen (2010b) who suggest that whether a certain project is seen as a resource or a strain depends on the principal. Yet, it should also be pointed out that based on whole interviews none of the administrators can be labeled as simply active, passive, or reactive overall.

Some of the interviewed administrators brought up means of overcoming some of the perceived problems with projects, such as engaging different parties in cooperation outside of official projects. Veikko, Urban-M, provided an example international cooperation between a school where he had been a principal and a German school. Each year a group of pupils visited each other's schools. There was no official project behind the cooperation and, thus, as Veikko explained, no paperwork. In Veikko's opinion such small-scale, local means of cooperation can at best be simple and low on bureaucracy, and therefore eliminate one of the major causes for passive or reactive stances towards projects among administrators. In regards to such small, self-organized cooperation, Veikko's stance was active. According to him, it is easy to create different kinds of networks if you are enthusiastic, and funds that would usually be acquired through a project are replaced by other sources of funding. He did not ignore the matter of money, but explained how it is possible to receive funding from companies, offices, and organizations. Such a way of organizing finances for the cooperation flexibly and spontaneously, Veikko admitted, is better suited to bigger cities. In Veikko's case it is interesting to see that his stance towards self-organized cooperation was active, but his stance towards projects in general was passive because of the changes in the physical environment at the time of the interview. It could be a difference between past and present points of time, or between different ways of organizing cooperation, but with such limited data it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions. Bottom-up, local reorganization of language education and means of communication and cooperation will be further discussed in the following chapters.

Particularly in the rural municipality it was considered that bigger units are better suited to participate in projects. On the school level, Reetta explained that in a small school it requires a lot from a person to participate, whereas in a bigger unit the responsibility is more evenly divided among multiple teachers. For example, projects that require the participating teacher to spend time away from school immediately create challenges in the organization of teaching and substituting the teacher. Anne,

the head of the local education department and the upper secondary school principal, also considered her possibilities to add more project work to her current workload as limited. On the regional scale, she argued that bigger entities are well equipped with project know-how, which is an important asset due to the bureaucratic nature of projects. In the following extract, Anne discusses the advantages that the biggest entity responsible for organizing education in the region has:

(4)
A: -- ainahan sitä [hankeosaamista] isommilla toimijoilla on enemmän. Niillähän on varmasti varaa -- palkatakin semmoisia ihmisiä [jotka hoitavat hankkeita] -- sitten kouluja kun on yhdistetty niin siellähän on valtaisa määrä rehtoreita sillon [ja] joku voi ryhtyä keskittymään hanketyöhön.
A: -- the bigger entities always have more of it [project know-how]. They can surely afford -- to hire such people [who focus on projects]-- and when schools have been joined together, there are a huge number of principals [and] someone can focus on project work.

The extract above could be read as an argument for specialization. In the extract Anne argued that a bigger administrative unit has led to bigger schools and thus employee resources have been freed up to focus on project work. While the idea, rooted in statistics, that bigger units are beneficial for the organization of language teaching surfaces in chapter 2.6, the notion that bigger entities have additional opportunities for specialization appears new. In the current situation, Anne hoped that a bigger entity with more resources would regionally take responsibility for staying up to date on projects that are available. As examples of such entities on the regional level she listed a regional project that operates as a hub over municipal borders, and *maakunta*s (regions) that enable the cooperation between municipalities. In addition, as national level entities that could take responsibility for coordinating projects, she mentioned the National board of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The interviewees considered the role of projects as a way of developing the organization of foreign language education either more or less prominent in the future. This is idea of prominence is not necessarily connected to whether the

interviewees regarded projects positive or negative in general. Anne, Rural-M, considered projects lucrative on the condition that they provide the municipality or school with more resources instead of bureaucracy. As examples, she mentioned projects that allow the purchase of IT equipment and finance upper secondary school courses focused on work life skills. In her view, the more practical the project was the better. Anne's view reflects the findings of the final report of the *KIMMOKE* project (discussed in chapter 2.8), which brought up the relatively non-restricted use of funding as one of the factors that was considered as beneficial for the success of a project. Despite her conditional optimism towards projects, Anne did not consider them the most prominent tool for developing foreign language education in the future. This sentiment becomes apparent in the following extract:

(5)
A: Kuvittelen ja uskon, että siihen täytyy varautua että -- koulutuksen järjestäjä itse pystyy järjestämään sen minkä järjstää. -- Ne varmasti väheeneekin tällaiset -- oman maan kansalliset jutut. Tietysti EU:sta, kun sinne kovasti maksetaankin, voi olla mahdollista, että sieltä jotain saa, mutta ne on sitten -- kovan byrokratian takana.
A: I imagine and believe that you have to prepare for -- the entity responsible for the organization of education to able to organize whatever they organize by themselves. -- They will surely diminish these -- national projects. Of course the EU, since we pay them very much, might be able to provide us with something, but there will be -- a lot of bureaucracy.

In the extract Anne suggested that municipalities and other organizers of education cannot rely on projects as a means of developing education. According to her, there will be fewer projects available for participation in the future, and the international ones that are available require plenty of paperwork. In contrast to Anne's view, Suvi, the head of local education department in urban-M, considered projects as an integral part of the development of language education. In her view, municipalities themselves often lack funds specifically budgeted towards educational development. The following extract demonstrates her view on the necessity of projects:

(6)
S: -- ei kaupungin tai kuntien budjeteissa yleensä kehittämisrahaa ole, että se on raavittava jostain muualta pois. -- erikseen korvamerkittyä kehittämisrahaa ei varmaan kovin monen kunnan budjetista löydy. Että -- on ainakin meille --

nämä hankerahotukset -- tuoneet sen suurimman mahdollisuuden tehdä kehittämistyötä ilman että se on muusta perustyöstä kohtuuttoman paljon pois. S: -- in the budgets of cities or municipalities, there usually are no funds for development, which means that the development funding must be stripped away from something else. -- specific earmarked development funding is unlikely to be included in the budgets of most municipalities. For us -- project funding -- has been the most significant opportunity to develop education without taking too much away from other basic operations.

In the previous extract Suvi argued that projects provide the best opportunities for educational development in a situation where municipal budgets often lack designated funds for development. In a situation like this, her positive outlook on projects partially appeared to stem from a lack of alternatives. When asked if she considered projects as a good means of developing language education, she answered that she has to. All in all, both Anne and Suvi had a fairly positive outlook on projects altogether. Yet, while Anne argued that municipalities have to be prepared to be able to develop education independently, Suvi considered municipalities as heavily dependent on project funding.

In contrast to the relatively positive views expressed above, Lauri considered that the current model of funding has become an exhausting chain of one project after another. His outlook on projects as a way of developing education was negative, but he did not suggest that the trend would reverse in the future. There appeared to be no shared opinion among the interviewees on the future prominence of projects as tool for developing the organization of language education. It could be speculated that such a situation of uncertainty could create difficulties in the long term development of the organization of language education. As such, the model of funding educational development through projects, seemed to be in contrast with the view expressed by Takala et al. (2000: 250-251) who suggest that solutions to issues regarding foreign language teaching policies should be created systematically, thoroughly, and consistently. Similarly, project funding also appeared to be unfavorable way of gaining positive long term results in the organization of foreign language teaching. This finding seems to be in line with the results of the national projects discussed in chapter 2.8.

As a means of educational development, some of the interviewees viewed the present form of projects as problematic. Lauri, on the one hand, understood the need for earmarked development money. He argued that earlier the money provided to municipalities by the central government could be used on completely unintended purposes as it was not earmarked and controlled. To illustrate his view, he gave an example of how funds provided for language education could end up being spent on sports facilities or something as far removed from the original intention. On the other hand, he considered the current model of funding through specific projects as exhausting:

(7)
L: On päätetty että nyt on selkeät hankkeet ja rahaa saa käyttää vain siihen hankkeeseen. Se vain tarkoittaa että aina tulee hanke, hanke, hanke. Että miettikää mitä siinä hankkeessa voisi tehdä, että saataisiin rahaa. Ja ne [hankkeet] on ärsyttäviä ja puuduttavia ja hirveän intensiivisiä -- ja kun niitä on ihan järkyttävä määrä, niin ei ihme että ihmiset ei innostu sitten oman työn ohella pyörittämään jotain hanketta.
L: -- It has been decided that now there will be unambiguous projects and the money can only be used within that project. It just means that there is always project after project after project. So go ahead and think what could be done within the project so we could get money. And they [projects] are annoying, dulling, and very intensive -- and when there are a massive number of them, it is no wonder that people are not excited to run a project on top of their other assignments.

In the previous extract, Lauri suggested that the current way of funding educational development through earmarked, highly specific projects has led to a constant barrage of projects. Municipal employees are forced to think of practices that would fill requirements for project funding. The sheer number of projects makes municipal employees, such as teachers, unenthusiastic about them.

One of the key issues with the current model of projects appeared to be that the top-down funding and the local, grass-roots practices did not meet. Both Lauri and Veikko suggested that there are many good local or school level practices that could form the basis of funding. The current model of project funding causes a loss of resources in multiple ways according to Lauri. He argued that, on the one hand, time is spent on writing applications for project funding for activities that are invented

only after the money has been received. On the other hand, the applicants verbally, on paper, attempt to make local or school level practices seem like they fit the framework of a project. Such ways of responding to the issues with project funding could be considered reactive, a response to external demands of the project funding system imposed upon the administrators. In the following extract Lauri illustrates the issue of mismatch between local practices and top-down project funding:

(8)
L: Monessa muussakin toiminassa, ei pelkästään kielten opetuksessa, on hyviä juttuja, mutta ne pyörii, pyörii, pyörii. Just ja just pysyy hengissä. Eikä niitä voida laajentaa kun ei ole rahaa ja sitten ei tule semmosta hanketta mihin ne uppoaisi.

L: In many fields, not just in language teaching, there are good practices, but they run on and on and on. Barely staying alive. And they cannot be expanded because there is no money and there are no projects that they would fit.

In the extract above Lauri argued that many local practices struggle, as they cannot be expanded due to lack of funding. This lack of financial support stems from the fact that the practices do not fit the frameworks of the existing projects. As an alternative, Lauri and Veikko hoped for a bottom-up approach where local practices would be supported by authorities on various levels of educational decision making. Veikko suggested that municipal authorities could fund the ideas or practices of an individual school. These bottom-up, school level experiments could later be evaluated through reports and possibly be expanded to other local schools. Lauri expressed similar ideas that are beyond the municipal scope. He suggested that school or local level practices could act as the basis for applying earmarked project funding. This way the municipalities would not have to either invent completely new practices out of nothing or attempt to force existing practices to fit predefined project frameworks. The funding would still fundamentally be top-down project funding, but the basis for funding would be in local, grass-roots practices and needs.

In conclusion, top-down funded development projects appeared to occupy a prominent role in the development of language education on the local level as every decision maker was very opinionated on the topic. The prominence seemed to

partially originate from the lack of other development funds, which made the participants dependent on the top-down funded projects to an extent. Whether top-down project funding would remain prominent in the future appeared to be uncertain in the administrators' point of view. On the one hand, there was a belief that the amount of project funding available would diminish in the near future, and, on the other hand, the current model of funding seemed to have become an endless chain of projects. Such uncertainty of future funding may present challenges to the decision making process that has already been described as fractured.

While at best project funding could be used to support municipal development strategies, enable the purchase of equipment and training, and gain funds for the development of language education, the interviewees suggested numerous issues with projects. A major issue that came up in multiple interviews was the bureaucratic nature of the model of funding. The paperwork was considered to consume considerable amounts of staff resources and require project know-how, which was argued to be an asset of bigger entities. Another issue was the unmanageable number of projects and the overflow of information associated with them. The interviewees also argued that earmarked project funding left good local practices without funds, as they did not meet the requirements of particular projects, unless the practices were pigeonholed to seemingly fit the project framework with word choices in the applications. As a solution, a model of funding was suggested, in which pre-existing local practices could be used as a basis for the applying of project funding. Another solution was to avoid projects altogether and create local, bottom-up means of reorganizing of language education and forms of cooperation. These aspects of the development of the organization of language teaching are explored in chapters 4.2. and 4.3. Kangasvieri et al. (2011: 29) suggests that low engagement of the teaching personnel, lack of time, and lack of support from the school community were among the key reasons for many top-down projects to be unsuccessful. The problems expressed by the interviewees of the present study could, however, be considered as some of the issues underlying the problems presented in previous research.

From the point of view of social action, the administrators interviewed for the present study appeared relatively passive towards projects. The passivity towards projects often appeared to stem from experiences the interviewees had undergone or personal features they could not alter, such as changes in physical environment, negative experiences related to projects, and lack of language proficiency. In addition, they often considered themselves to be in a secondary role and not the ones who are responsible for taking initiative. They reckoned that they are responsible for keeping up to date on available projects, but it was ultimately up to individual teachers to take initiative. Reactive stances manifested themselves in the way some administrators reacted to the demands of project applications. They applied for practices that did not exist or altered word forms so that existing practices fit the project frameworks. Some administrators were active in the way they followed the information provided by the project funders and consulted their staff on projects. Otherwise, much of the active initiatives were aimed towards local ways of reorganizing language teaching and forms of communication and cooperation, which are discussed in chapters 4.2 and 4.3.

4.2 Local reorganization of language education

When it comes to alternative ways of organizing language education, the interviewed administrators viewed teachers as either an active resource or an obstacle for change. Suvi (Urban-M) regarded the role of individual teachers as an important source of new ideas. The role of local educational administration and the head of local education department is to estimate whether the ideas suggested by teachers are viable over a longer period of time. The following extract exemplifies these roles:

> (9)
> S: Hyvät ideat kumpuaa opettajien innostuksesta. Jos vaan saa sen opettajien innostuksen säilymään, niin kyllä niitä ideoitakin monesti löytyy. Ja sitten toki kunnan tasolla pitää harkita aina että mihin meillä on pitkäkestosesti mahdollisuuksia –

S: Good ideas stem from teachers' enthusiasm. If you can just maintain that enthusiasm, there will often be ideas. And then on a municipal level we have to consider what is within the realm of possibility in the long run.

In the extract above, Suvi highlighted the importance of teachers' enthusiasm. As an example of an initiative that was brought up by teachers, Suvi mentioned the municipal plans to begin English education at an earlier grade level. While individual teachers were, on the one hand, seen as active in the development of new ways of organizing language education, they were, on the other hand, also seen as a reactive group who need persuasion before they accept changes. Suvi admitted that the shift of the beginning of English teaching to an earlier grade level requires a lot from the teachers. Similar shift in the starting grade level of English education was also taking place in Rural-M where Johanna, a principal, was behind the change. She said she has had to convince teachers of the benefits of the new approach. Thus, her stance towards the reorganization was active. The examples of both Suvi and Johanna show that individual administrators can view teachers as both a catalyst for change and an obstacle. All in all, from administrators' point of view the importance of teachers was clearly recognized.

In reorganizing language teaching, the role of local administrators was seen as decisive if also difficult. Reetta, for example, argued that administrators make a great difference when it comes to the organization of language teaching:

(10)
R: -- sekin [kielten opetuksen järjestäminen] on kyllä hyvin paljon kiinni johtoportaasta. Siellä nyt on ainakin toistaiseksi ollut sillä tavalla viisas johto, että ne on lähtenyt kehittelemään uusia käytäntöjä ja viemään niitä eteenpäin ja kokeilemaan, että onnistuuko tämä. Jos ei taas tämmöisiä [henkilöitä] siellä olisi, niin sitten oltaisiin ihan toisessa jamassa.
R: -- it [the organization of language teaching] is very much up to the administrative level. So far the administrators have been wise in the sense that they have begun to invent new practices and to push them forward, and to try out if the practices work out. If we did not have such people there, we would face a completely different situation.

In the extract above, Reetta suggested that the current administration in Rural-M is willing to invent and apply new practices to reorganize language education. She argued that without such individuals in the administration, the situation of language

teaching would be different. Thus, Reetta considered the role of individuals to be decisive. Veikko suggested that heads of education and other municipal administrators have to make decisions on how to allot municipal educational funds based on their values. At the current situation, he argued, the available money does not cover everything and difficult decisions must be made. For example, whether to hire a special needs assistant or an English-speaking trainee. Nevertheless, in Veikko's view, municipal educational administrators have a better opportunity to advocate for various changes and practices in the wider municipal administration than principals, a group he himself identified with. While Veikko, in the role of a principal, appeared somewhat passive in regards to forwarding new practices, he still acknowledged the influence individuals in local administration have. Although Veikko admitted the influence individuals have, he still suggests that administrators on different levels waste energy on toiling with resources or the lack thereof. Unlike the lack of awareness suggested in chapter 2.7, some of the local level administrators interviewed for the present study seemed very aware of the influence individuals can have on the organization of language teaching.

In both Rural- and Urban-M, individual administrators were active in the process of reorganizing language education because of their own personal experiences. In Rural-M, Johanna had taken the opportunity for change provided by the process of updating the local curriculum. Her goal was to have A1-language English study to begin at an earlier grade level and with less emphasis on the textbook. The following extract demonstrates the role of her personal experiences in advocating the change:

> (11)
> J: Tämä oli nyt siis minun henkilökohtainen ideani. Tiedän sen kielten opetuksen merkityksen ja tarpeen. Ja tässä on varmaan se, että kun oma kielitaito ei ollu koskaan hyvä, ja se on opeteltu pänttäämällä, eikä luovasti, joustavalla, mukavalla tavalla. Eli minulle tuli heti se tunne, -- että nyt me tehdään tämä, että lähdetään pehmeästi liikkeelle.
> *J: So this was my personal idea. I know the importance and then need of language teaching. And this probably has something to do with the fact that my own language proficiency was never good and it was acquired through rigorous study of the textbook instead of learning in a creative, flexible, and pleasant way. So I immediately had the feeling, -- that now will do this, we will have a soft start.*

In the extract above, Johanna explained how her own lack of language proficiency and wearisome methods of learning during her own time in school made her an advocate for a different, less rigorous approach to language teaching. In Johanna's view of language, spoken communication was very important. This was one of the reasons for her to come up with the idea of a new elective subject, where the focus is on spoken English instead of the textbook. Thus, Johanna's active stance towards various means of local reorganization of language teaching appeared to stem from her earlier personal experiences as a pupil. Besides these past experiences, Johanna also highlighted the importance of in-service training as a source of new ideas. For example, the National Board of Education organizes training on the updating of local curricula.

In Urban-M, Veikko was advocating for reorganization of language education, because of the positive experiences he gained in a previous job. His drive for change had, however, been diminished by local level decisions. In another municipality Veikko had worked as the head of education and enabled language study to begin at an earlier grade level in form of language shower type of activity. He argued that when language teaching is spread out as showers within other lessons instead of a single class of English, there would be more repetition, which works in the advantage of language teaching. He was convinced that such an approach has positive effects, and was, therefore, an advocate for similar practices in the municipality in which he worked as a principal at the time of the interview. His active stance in the matter could be seen as linked to his views on language learning and learning in general. In addition, his positive experiences in another municipality can be viewed as another factor contributing towards the active stance Veikko took. He explained that the plans of introducing an additional lesson hour for language shower practices have been unsuccessful due to the unwillingness of local authorities to provide the resources. Yet, as a principal Veikko was still actively promoting the idea of language shower based activity even without the resources:

(12)

> V: Meillä oli suunnitelmissa joku[nen] vuosi sitten, että me voitais tässä meidän koulussa aloittaa varhennettu englanti siten, että siihen ei resurssoida mitään rahaa. Eli siihen ei tule lisää tunteja, mutta me tehdään vain itse sellainen ideologinen muutos siten, että opettaja puhuu vähintään tunnin viikossa englantia lapsille.
>
> *V: Some years ago, we had a plan to begin English teaching at an earlier grade level so that there would be no money allotted towards it. So there will be no extra lesson hours, but we ourselves just make such an ideological shift, so that the teacher speaks at least one hour of English to the children in a week.*

In the extract above Veikko discussed the plans to begin English teaching at an earlier grade level with no added resources, but with a shift in the way of thinking and operating at the school. He went on to list a number of ways in which English could be included in the teaching of other subjects, such as in form of greetings, numbers, days of the week. Veikko suggested that such reorganization of language teaching is not always dependent on funding. This idea expressed by the principal seems to reflect the view presented in chapter 2.7, where it was argued that the financial situation does not always explain the limited possibilities for language study. Instead, the will of decision makers and their understanding of language study are of great importance.

Besides lack of funding, another local decision that caused difficulty for Veikko's plans was the change of local curriculum. The new curriculum introduced English at an earlier grade level, and whereas Veikko's plans included language shower type activity spread over different lessons, the curriculum introduced regular English lessons to younger groups of pupils. Thus, Veikko explained that he no longer has the need to carry on with his plans. The local level curriculum design can be seen as a factor contributing towards Veikko's reactive stance. Nevertheless, Veikko was still active in the matter in the sense that he suggested that he could still influence the way English teaching is organized: whether the teaching is conducted by an English teacher or a class teacher alone, or both of them in cooperation. Both Veikko's and Johanna's cases suggested that the role of an individual administrator and their personal experiences as pupils or professionals could influence their stance towards reorganizing language teaching.

In Rural-M, Anne has actively reorganized language education in her double role as the head of education and upper secondary school principal. The reorganization that has taken place was to an extent influenced by tradition and finances. Anne has restructured the language program of the upper secondary school and the middle school so that pupils have more opportunities to select elective languages during their years in school as the language courses have been scheduled in a more efficient way. In the following extract Anne recounts the reasons that led her to reorganize language teaching:

(13)
A: Se lähti vaan siitä, että jotenkin piti miettiä – kun eihän sitä rahaa ikinä liikaa ole – että nää kielet tällä [vanhalla] tavalla tarjottuna vie niin paljon [rahaa]. Ja sitten meillä oli täällä sellainen perinne, että oli ihan mahdottoman pieniä ryhmiä. Että minultakin kysyttiin kun minä tulin tähän tehtävään, että jatkuuko sama käytäntö, että vaikka ois yksi oppilas niin silti järjestetään se [kielenopetus]. -- sanoin että kuulostaa aika pieneltä määrältä ja siten minä aloitin -- kielten opettajien kanssa neuvottelemaan --
A: It simply started with the thought that – as there is never too much money to go around – that the languages take up a lot [of money] when they are offered like this [the old way]. And then we had a tradition of impossibly small groups here. So when I started in this position I was asked whether the old practice would continue, would it [language teaching] be organized even if there was only one pupil. -- I said it sounds like a very small number and began -- to negotiate with the language teachers.

In the previous extract Anne explained that behind the reorganization of language teaching was the municipal tradition of teaching elective languages even if the group size was very small. As this practice was uneconomical financially, Anne thought of a solution and negotiated the practical execution and details with language teachers. As a result of the reorganization, Anne claimed that the municipality saves tens of thousands of euros. Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b) suggest that individual decision makers have considerable power to influence language programs, but are often quite oblivious of this power. Anne, however, appeared to be a prime example of an administrator who uses their power. Her case also demonstrated few other aspects presented in chapter 2.7. First, her solution exemplified the notion that small municipalities often seek solutions within themselves. Second, the matter of finances often plays an important role in decisions regarding language education. It was not

easy to pinpoint the origin of Anne's active stance, but the earlier municipal practices seemed to be an influence.

As a solution for national level issues with language education, the local models of reorganization of language teaching still struggled with some issues. As Lauri suggested in regards to project funding (chapter 4.1), there are many good practices that are in operation for a longer time, which however cannot be expanded due to lack of finances. Anne too hoped for recognition and support for local practices:

> (14)
> A: Kyllä minä paikallisiin mahdollisuuksiin aika pitkälti tässä [kehitystyössä] luottaisin, mutta sehän olisi hienoa, jos ne olisi jossakin rahoituksen pohjana. -- sillä tavalla näkisi, että semmoista toimintaa arvostetaan. Sitähän voi tämmöiset pellepelottomat vaikka mitä keksiä, mutta eihän siitä välttämättä sen kummempaa tule.
> A: I would rely on local practices in this matter [educational development] to a great extent, but it would be wonderful if they were the basis for funding in some cases. -- That would show that such activity is appreciated. Inventors like me can come up with all sorts of things, but it might never go further than that.

In the extract above Anne expressed her trust in local practices, but also hoped that these practices could in some cases form the basis of funding as well. She argued that ideas alone are not enough if they are not supported in some way. Veikko hoped for more support to local ideas from the administration. In his view, ideas are not met with incentives to develop them into practices, but are often rejected due to lack of resources. In Reetta's view, local conditions should be better taken into account on the national level and regions should be supported in educational experiments. Besides issues with receiving financial support, another problem with local practices is, according to Anne, the fact that they cannot be directly copied from one municipality to the next, no matter how good the model is. For example, Anne explained that the model of reorganization in Rural-M was dependent on suitable teacher resources. If teachers have different language combinations or number of teaching hours, the model needs at least to be tweaked to fit the new municipality. Altogether, according to administrators in both municipalities, ideas and local practices need more support from the local and national administrators, often in the

form of resources. Decision makers also need to be careful if they plan to import a successful model for reorganizing language education from another municipality, as local conditions are crucial for the success of these models.

As a summary, the bottom-up, local means of reorganizing language education were considered as generally positive by the administrators who were interviewed for the present study, and their stance towards these local means was active. The notion presented by Hämäläinen et al. (2007: 65-66) and Kyllönen and Saarinen (2010b: 7) that individual decision makers can make a difference when it comes to the organization of language education becomes highlighted when local reorganization of language education is discussed. Besides the importance of individual administrators, the role of teachers was also considered important by interviewees. Teachers could, on the one hand, represent a reactive force that needs to be persuaded in order to introduce changes, or, on the other hand, teachers were the ones who provided the initiative for the reorganization of language teaching. The local level changes in the organization of language education ranged from the alteration of the beginning grade level of foreign language study to more comprehensive models of reorganization. The reasons behind the reorganization varied. Some of the interviewees were influenced by their earlier personal experiences in previous jobs or as pupils. These experiences appeared to have influenced the administrators' perceptions of language learning. In addition to personal experiences, the changes were in some cases inspired by local tradition of organizing language education and a simple interest to create savings. As individuals occupy a central role in local level reorganization of language education and often are personally advocating the changes, it is hardly surprising that their stance towards the changes was to large extent active. Ways of locally reorganizing language education suffered from some issues too. According to the administrators, there are good local practices that struggle and cannot be expanded due to lack of finances. The administrators suggested that local practices could act as the basis of funding. Another issue lies in the nature of the means of reorganization. As the solutions are local and developed within a particular municipality, they usually

cannot be exported to other municipalities as they are, but require some adjustments to fit the new conditions. In contrast to the notion expressed in chapter 2.7, where it was suggested that individuals who have the power to influence the organization of language teaching are to an extent unaware of their role, the results of the present study suggested something else. In regards to local reorganization of language study, the administrators interviewed for the present study appeared to be conscious of their role.

4.3 Communication and cooperation

As the decision-making process regarding language education has become increasingly decentralized and splintered, different ways of communication and cooperation between local level actors have presumably taken a more prominent role in the development of the organization of language teaching. For example, in order for a good practice that has been invented and tested in one municipality to spread to others, some means of communication and cooperation between actors is required. While the matter has not been researched before, it would seem that ways of communication and cooperation have the potential to either forward educational change or in the worst case hinder it. The interviews done for the present study brought both positive aspects and problems to light.

As with development projects and ways of reorganizing language education, the interviewees considered the role of teachers as important when it comes to communication and cooperation. Lauri and Veikko, principals in Urban-M, both hoped language teachers to be up-to-date on the information about new projects and practices. Lauri, who felt somewhat overwhelmed by the amount of information he receives, wished that language teachers were responsible for going through and filtering information. He also suggested that teachers should actively show interest and take initiative to participate in projects and experiments. Veikko as well had ideas of the role that teachers could take:

(15)
V: Kouluilla voi olla esimerkiksi kansainvälisistä asioista vastaava opettaja, joka aina huolehtii, että se on ajan tasalla siitä mitä [projekteja] on tarjolla. [Hän] Markkinoi, selvittää, haistelee ihmisiltä että mikä on tilanne. Onko meillä tänä lukuvuonna mahdollisuutta lähteä tämmöisiin hommiin --
V: Schools can for example have a teacher who is responsible for international affairs and stays up to date on what [projects] is available. [He/she] Advertises, looks into, asks people what the situation is. Do we have the possibility to participate in such activity this school year --

In the previous extract Veikko suggested that schools could have a teacher who has the latest information and acts as a local spokesperson for projects and experiments that they consider suitable. Suvi suggested that presently language teachers can organize international contacts with ease with the use of information technology. In general, the local level administrators interviewed for the present study hoped for teachers to take a bigger role in both following and promoting new projects and practices.

Teacher training and in-service training were considered as sources for new ideas and practices. In Veikko's view teacher training and in-service training are both important in the sense that they help to provide schools with teachers who are not afraid to experiment. These forms of training lay the basis for the change in language education on a wider scale. Anne too suggested that teacher training is in a decisive role in the development of language teaching:

(16)
A: -- ratkaisevassa asemassa on opettajankoulutus, kielten opetuksessakin. Siellä jos jo harjoitellaan tärkeitä uusia asioita, niin sitä kauttahan ne sitten tulee kouluun. Kyllä minä uskoisin, että vaikka tietotekniikan hyödyntäminenkin, niin kyllähän se sieltä päin lähtee -- että jos saadaan niitä hyviä juttuja juurrutettua jo opiskeluvaiheessa, niin ne varmaan luontevammin lähtee tähän normaaliin työhön. Että sinne [opettajakoulutus] panisin aika paljon sitä painoa --
A: -- teacher training is in a decisive role, in language teaching as well. If new important things are practiced there already, they will then be transferred to schools too. I would believe that for example the application of information technology will begin from there [teacher training] -- so if we manage to instill good practices during teacher studies, they probably will transfer to the everyday work more naturally. So I would put a lot of weight on that [teacher training] --

In the previous extract Anne explained that if teachers become familiar with new practices during teacher training already, these practices are subsequently likely to spread into schools and become part of the school culture. As an example, Anne mentioned the utilization of information technology. Johanna, like Veikko and Anne, put emphasis on teacher training and in-service training. She suggested that while teachers have often become familiar with new practices during teacher training, many teachers do not apply these practices in their everyday work in schools. To remedy this development, Johanna suggested that in-service training is important, as it can provide teachers with new ideas and tips. Reetta too named in-service training as one of the sources for new ideas and practices. When it comes to the reorganization of language education that has taken place in Rural-M (discussed in chapter 4.2), Johanna said that besides her own personal experiences, she has been inspired by training sessions and lectures. Thus, it appears that many of the interviewees somewhat passively reckoned that the source of new ideas is outside of the influence of local administrators and their municipalities as teacher training and in-service training are to a large extent organized by entities like universities and the National Board of Education. Yet, Anne, for example, brought up the role of municipalities as well:

> (17)
> A: -- kunnilla [täytyy] olla vähän rahaa laittaa ihmisiä niihin [täydennyskoulutuksiin]. Plus muuten kehittää sinne työyhteisöihin semmoinen henki, että siellä halutaankin kehittää [opetusta] ja olla mukana siinä [kehityksessä]. Mieluiten kärjessä, eikä ihan jälkijunassa.
> *A: -- municipalities [must] have some money to support people to participate in them [in-service training courses]. Plus otherwise develop such a spirit in the work communities that they want to develop [teaching] and participate in it [the development]. Preferably in the front line, not lagging behind.*

In the previous extract Anne argued that the municipal employers need provide teachers the opportunity to participate in in-service training through funding the participation. Besides the finances, in Anne's opinion, the municipal employers should also help to create work environments that support educational development, preferably among the first instead of the last. In this respect, munipalities were

expected to assume an active stance towards enabling and encouraging participation in in-service training, despite the fact that the actual training is usually organized by entities other than municipalities themselves.

Many of the interviewees said that ideas and good practices spread though teachers' networks, but did not participate in these networks themselves. In Urban-M, both Suvi and Lauri mentioned language teachers' associations as a source for information. Neither of them discussed these associations in detail, but Suvi reckoned that the associations are active and help language teachers develop their work. She also suggested that the associations are the first level in distributing information, and that she herself later receives the information from language teachers. Lauri considered the associations as a way for teachers to stay informed about new developments. Anne supposed that different models for reorganization of language teaching spread among language teachers in their networks. As an example she mentioned that the Russian teacher has participated in the network provided by the *SETKA* project, which received funding from the National Board of Education (Setka – Hankkeen eteneminen (n.d.)). Language teachers' associations and other networks for teachers, which are formed, for example, through projects, represented a source of new ideas and practices that is outside of municipalities. The administrators appeared to be aware of these sources, but were to an extent uninvolved and passive about them.

The interviewees appeared to be uninvolved in some of the teachers' networks, but had their own unofficial and loosely organized networks in which they participated. In an era of decentralized decision making, these social media platforms provide a platform where different local practices can be discussed. Reetta brought up various networks for language teachers that have been set up by active individual teachers, not associations or projects. She said that these online networks provide ideas and concrete help with everyday work. Johanna also brought up social media networks as a source of ideas:

(18)

J: -- meillähän on monenlaisia sivustoja mihin voi liittyä. Minäkin olen tuolta Facebookin kautta esimerkiksi kontakteja hakenut ja liittynyt erilaisiin ryhmiin, mistä tulee sitten ajatuksia ja ideoita. Lähinnä ne on tuolla sosiaalisessa mediassa. -- ne on sellaisia, että joku on koonnut ryhmän ympärillensä, jossa on saman alan ihmisiä. Että ei ne -- virallisia ole, mutta tulee mielipiteitä [ja] kannanottoja. Niiden kanssa vois olla samaa mieltä tai täysin eri mieltä, -- mutta se herättää omia ajatuksia.

J: -- we have many kinds of websites that you can join. I too have searched for contacts and joined different groups on Facebook, and they provide me with thoughts and ideas. They [groups] are mostly in the sphere of social media. -- they are groups where someone has gathered a group of people working in the same field around themselves. So they aren't -- official, but they are a platform for opinions [and] statements. You can either agree or completely disagree with them, -- but they help to provoke your own thoughts.

In the extract above, Johanna explained that she has sought for contacts and ideas through various groups on social media. The groups are unofficial networks of people working in the occupation that have been created by individuals. In Johanna's view it is not important whether or not you agree with the opinions that are expressed, as they are thought-provoking nevertheless. In a situation where decentralized educational decision making has allowed for greater variety of ways the national education policy manifests itself on the local level (see chapter 2.3), social media appears to have created an unofficial platform, where local level actors can discuss their views. Yet, besides social media networks, there have also been national attempts to provide platforms where local level actors can promote their good practices. Anne mentioned that such platforms are scattered out there and that they theoretically, and to some extent in practice, enable the sharing of good practices. She believed that some people read these suggestions, but personally she appeared passive about such sites. Such platforms did not come up in any of the other interviews.

The role of individual administrators and their contacts appeared important for the spread of ideas and concrete models of organizing language education. Veikko suggested that presently it is easy to create different kinds of networks if one is willing. In his opinion, small scale, grassroots initiatives are often enough to build cooperation between actors without the help from bigger projects and with

minimum bureaucracy. Thus, he argued for the importance of active individuals. Johanna mentioned a bigger, more organized meeting of principals where she had a long discussion with principals from the capital area, where the situation of foreign language teaching is very different from Rural-M. She considered the exchange of ideas fruitful. Anne has been actively in contact with various parties that are involved in education within the municipality or in the region. There has been cooperation and visits between Anne and the administrators of another municipality in the region. As a result, the way that foreign language study has been reorganized in Rural-M had spread to the other municipality as well. Within Rural-M, Anne has advertised upper secondary school language courses to companies, been in contact with banks and organizations, and organized cooperation between the upper secondary school and the community college. When asked, she admitted that her way of thinking has been important for the cooperation between the institutions. Thus, she seemed to exemplify the idea expressed in chapter 2.7 that the understanding and will of individual decision makers can really make a difference in the way language education is organized.

While sometimes difficult to separate from the influence of individuals, cooperation between schools and municipalities that is supported by regional projects could be seen as a way for local practices to spread. Suvi considered bigger projects useful for sharing local practices:

> (19)
> S: -- mä tapaan kollegoita ja meillä on kollegoiden välistä yhteistyötä, [jossa] voi jakaa kaikenlaista virallisesti ja epävirallisesti. Mutta sittenhän hirmu hyviä ovat nämä kehittämishankkeet, joissa on monta kuntaa mukana. Opetushallistus on tehnyt näitä korvamerkittyjä kehittämishankkeita, että niissähän -- voi jakaa kuntien välisiä ideoita ja toimintamalleja.
> *S: -- I meet up with colleagues and we have cooperation between colleagues that allows us to share all kinds of things officially and unofficially. But these development projects that involve multiple municipalities are also very good. The National Board of Education has initiated these earmarked development projects where local practices and ideas can be shared.*

In the previous extract Suvi explained that she meets colleagues both officially and unofficially. On top of this small scale cooperation, she praised top-down funded

development projects as a good opportunity for sharing local practices as they involve multiple municipalities. In Rural-M, Anne also reckoned that a regional project has created a forum where local level actors across municipal borders can gather together in a coordinated manner. Such practice, according to Anne, is a preferable way to stay up to date on projects and practices compared to depending on email exclusively. Johanna too brought up regional contact networks, through which participants meet face to face and discuss upcoming developments. While, according to Johanna, every municipality ultimately makes their own decisions, ideas and practices are spread beyond municipal borders.

Publicity and public relations were considered as means that help local practices to spread and gain funding. Anne explained that the way language teaching was reorganized in Rural-M gained recognition in form of awards because it saved the municipality money and enabled the municipality to offer a wide variety of languages. She also considered newspaper and magazine articles as one of the most important ways for local practices to spread. Thus, Anne considered positive attention through prizes and articles important. In Veikko's view, good grassroots practices can gain attention and funding from municipal officials, as the practices can be considered a way to receive positive media attention and publicity for the municipality:

> (20)
> V: Monessa tilanteessa käy sillä tavalla, että kun huomataan, että -- noi ihmiset [opettajat] tekee aivan hurjaa työtä, niin sitten ruvetaan olemaan kiinnostuneita. Sitten saatetaan kysyä, että mitä te tarvitsette lisää. -- Ja siihen saadaan media mukaan. Niin kyllä sinä sit rupeet saamaan [tukea] myös ylhäältä päin, koska se on PR:ää ja ylemmän puolen virkamiehet nauttii siitä kun joku tekee asian hyvin: -- "Meidän kaupungissa tehdään tällaisia asioita."
> V: In many situations when it is noticed that – those people [teachers] do an amazing job, people get interested. Then they [officials] might ask if you need something. – And media becomes involved. So you will then begin to gain [support] from higher up as well, because it is PR and upper level officials enjoy when someone does something well: – "In our city we do things like these."

In the previous extract Veikko explained the cycle of how he considered local practices to gain support through publicity. He suggested that outstanding work by a

teacher attracts the attention of media, and good publicity in turn acts as an incentive for local officials to provide the local practice with extra resources. Veikko suggested that local officials are interested in creating and spreading a positive impression of the municipality.

The administrators had contrasting views of their own role in regards to forwarding information on in-service training courses and development projects to teachers. In Rural-M, Johanna considered it her task to forward information to teachers. She explained that when she receives messages from parties that organize in-service training, she filters the messages and forwards them to the recipients that she considers to belong to a relevant target group. Besides forwarding links, websites, and information about in-service training, she also encourages the teaching personnel to seek for information themselves. Johanna suggested that she attempts to pass on the information that she herself receives through training courses. In Urban-M Lauri explained that he filters messages about projects to certain teachers if the content seems relevant, but he also suggested that language teachers receive information through their associations. Veikko claimed that his email is constantly crowded with information on various projects. He did not specifically say he does not forward the messages, but he said that by looking at the list of recipients he could tell that these messages are openly being sent to everyone all the time. Thus, it would appear that individual administrators have different views on the extent to which it is their task to forward messages on in-service training courses and projects. These roles vary between the active, filtering role to the passive, non-forwarding role. In a situation where email appears to be a key medium for transmitting information, such differences between individual administrators can be speculated to lead to a situation where the extent to which the personnel of a school is up-to-date on recent information varies between schools and municipalities.

In his interview, Lauri discussed the issues associated with extensive use of email-based communication and sharing of information in regards to the development of the organization of language education. According to Lauri, with the exclusion of a

few letters, email is undoubtedly the main medium for actors like the National Board of Education to inform local level actors on various projects and training courses. He argued that the main issue with email-based communication is that the volume is massive, and as a result a large amount of information gets ignored by the recipients. The issue is multiplied due to the active forwarding of messages on various levels of administration. Lauri explained that he can receive multiple forwarded duplicates of messages originally sent by the National Board of Education, for example. As a solution, he suggested that there could be some way of filtering the messages to appropriate recipients instead of forwarding everything to school principals, who are overburdened by the amount of information:

(21)
L: -- [tapana kehittää tiedotusta] joku muu kuin yksittäinen rehtori kävisi kaikki mahdolliset [viestit] läpi. -- Jotkut vastuuhenkilöt kävisi niitä [viestejä] läpi ja suodattaisivat: nämä olisi mahdollisia meille. Kielten opetuksessa kielen opettajat, jossain muussa jotkut muut. -- [nyt] ajatellaan aina että rehtori -- jaksaa paneutua kaikkeen, mutta se tulva on kuitenkin niin valtava, että en ole ainut, joka vaan samantien deletoi niitä [viestejä] --
L: -- *[as a way of developing the circulation of information] someone other than an individual principal would go through all the possible [messages]. -- Some designated people would go through them [messages] and filter them: these are viable to us. Language teachers in matters of language teaching, and some others in other matters. -- [now] the way of thinking is that a principal -- always has the energy to get involved in everything, but the flood is so massive that I'm not the only one who immediately deletes some of them [messages] --*

In the extract above, Lauri suggested that designated people could be responsible for the distribution of information based on their expert estimates on the viability and relevance of the messages. Among principals, Lauri claimed, it is not an uncommon practice to delete some of the messages without reading them. In an era of decentralized educational decision making and distribution of information through email, the notion that administrators feel overwhelmed by amount of information could lead to a situation that has serious repercussions from the point of view of the development of the organization of language education as information gets ignored.

All in all, the administrators that were interviewed for the present study brought up various means of communication which either promoted or hindered the spread of

new ideas and practices related to the organization of language education. As with development projects and local reorganization of language education (chapters 4.1 and 4.2), the administrators considered the role of teachers as important. They hoped for teachers to take more initiative in staying up to date with the information regarding new practices. The views of the interviewees differed in the question of whether to forward messages containing information on in-service training and projects to teachers. Some administrators considered it their responsibility to forward the messages, while some assumed that teachers receive the information through their associations or other sources already. In this sense the interviewees were divided into ones taking either active or passive stances. In addition to teachers themselves, the administrators considered teacher training and in-service training as important sources of information on new practices. They believed that new ways of organizing language education should be transferred into municipalities through new teachers, or through teachers that have taken part in in-service training. In this aspect, the administrators could be seen as passive, since both the universities and the in-service training courses provided by bigger entities can be considered to be outside of the influence of local level administrators. Yet, it was also suggested that there is a need for administrators that provide teachers opportunities to participate in in-service training. This suggestion requires an active stance from the administrators themselves.

The administrators were aware but also passive in regards to teachers' networks, which were considered as a source of ideas and practices. However, administrators had their own networks through which they received information on the organization of language education. Some of these networks operated on social media platforms. In a situation where national education policy manifests itself differently in different municipalities (see chapter 2.3), social media seems to have created an unofficial forum where decision makers can exchange information. The opportunities provided by such forums could be of interest to the national level actors as well, especially considering the issues with email based communication. These issues with email include the overflow of information and duplicate messages

that are forwarded by various levels of administration. In addition to social media platforms, the administrators brought up regional projects as means spreading information on new practices over municipal borders. Individual decision makers also employed their own personal contacts to transmit information and ideas. Finally, the administrators considered publicity in the form of favorable news articles and prizes as one important way for local practices to spread.

5 CONCLUSION

The present study set out to explore local level administrators' views on various concrete tools for the development of the organization of language education. Multiple aspects of development projects, local reorganization of language education, and communication and cooperation appeared as either beneficial or detrimental from their point of view. Bureaucracy was considered to be a central detrimental aspect of top-down development projects as it requires a considerable amount of resources and project know-how from municipalities or schools. Yet, projects that create opportunities for regional actors to gather and share information and practices were considered beneficial. Another aspect of project funding that was viewed as detrimental was the notion that it excludes existing local practices that do not fit the specific requirements of particular projects. For models of bottom-up reorganization of language education, the lack of outside funding and the restrictions on their direct application in other municipalities were considered as the main detrimental factors. Otherwise these models were seen in a positive light. Regarding communication and cooperation, the sheer amount of information provided to administrators through email was regarded as detrimental. Beneficial factors associated with communication and cooperation were personal contacts and unofficial networks, and publicity in the press and awards.

The present study also examined the different stances taken by local level administrators towards development projects, local reorganization of language education, and communication and cooperation. Based on the framework of social action, the interviewees presented themselves as active, passive, or reactive towards different tools of development of the organization of language education. The administrators expressed certain passivity towards top-down development projects. This was largely due to the perceived bureaucratic nature of the projects and individual reasons. In contrast, bottom-up local level reorganization of language education was met with a generally active stance, due to the extensive role that an individual has and the lack of bureaucracy. In regards to all of the tools for educational development discussed in the present study, the administrators expressed a need for active individual teachers while they themselves often occupied a secondary role. The importance of teacher training and in-service training were also highlighted by the administrators. As these services are to a wide extent provided by actors outside of their municipalities, the administrators split between taking a passive stance, or alternatively an active one, where they promoted the opportunities for teachers to participate in such training. The administrators were also divided in terms of social action when it came to forwarding information on in-service training courses and projects.

The research design of the present study provided plenty of relevant data for the analysis, but a more focused selection of themes for the interview could have improved the results of the study. The data of the present study consisted of six interviews with local level administrators from two municipalities. With such data, the results cannot be generalized. Even within the scope of the present study, the research design could be improved. The analysis of the data revealed that the original set of questions and themes that acted as the basis for the interviews was too wide and attempted to encompass too many aspects of local level development of the organization of language teaching. While the themes themselves could be considered as worth researching, they were beyond the scope of the present study. As such, a considerable of amount of interview time was spent on the discussion of themes that

yielded little insight on the final research questions. Yet, as the amount of previous research is very limited, it would have been difficult to preselect the most relevant and interesting themes. A more extensive set of pilot interviews could have been helpful in deciding the most relevant themes and questions.

The new information provided by the present study can employed on multiple levels of educational administration. For national level actors, such as the National Board of Education, the results of the present study can be used as a starting point for the development of new ways of supporting local level administrators in their work for the development of the organization of language education. The results contain ideas for the improvement of project funding and supporting of local practices. In addition, the results expose both issues and possibilities in the communication between actors on various levels. For local level decision makers, the present study supports the findings on the central role of individual administrators suggested by previous research. This information can be employed on the local level to develop an awareness of the possibilities individuals possess for the development of the organization of language education.

The results of the present study can also act as a starting point for future studies. Any of the themes explored through the first research question (development projects, local reorganization of language education, communication and cooperation) could be studied in further detail. While the present study operates on the local level, it could be of interest for future studies to shift the focus towards national level actors and explore their views on any or all of the themes of the present study. Alternatively, it could be of interest to expand the group of interviewees to other actors in the municipal administration, or teachers for example. Such research could help to provide a more comprehensive image of the field of the development of the organization of foreign language education. To provide results that are more suitable for generalization, the qualitative data could be used as a basis for questionnaires. Despite that the setting of urban municipalities and rural municipalities was included in the research design from the beginning, the present study did not

explore the differences between different types of municipalities. The differences between different types of municipalities could, therefore, be of interest for future studies. In addition, the differences between the views of heads of education and principals could be looked into.

The field of educational decision making has become increasingly decentralized and currently individuals in the local level educational administration have considerable influence on what kind of form foreign language teaching takes locally. It appears that local level administrators are not as unaware of their possibilities and role in the development of the organization of foreign language teaching, but are, nevertheless, hindered and made passive by various issues in the development process. The current way of funding educational development through earmarked projects is considered exhausting, work intensive and bureaucratic. There is a demand for ways of funding that would include pre-existing practices as the basis. In the current situation, many local practices are unable to expand because they do not meet the requirements of particular projects unless resources are spent on altering word forms used on written applications. Yet, projects that bring administrators together regionally were considered beneficial for the spread of ideas and practices. Thus, by favoring such projects, the spread of local practices could be supported by national level actors. In the environment of decentralized decision making, administrators also struggle with keeping up with projects and training courses in the flood of email-based communication. The administrators express a need for a more centralized, regionally organized way of coordinating the flow of information and managing projects. The administrators could also benefit from increased project know-how through training. In the development of the organization of language education, there seems to be unused potential in unofficial and personal networks of communication and cooperation. The spread of ideas and practices could benefit from a better use of these networks, as websites particularly created for promoting good local practices, seem not to be in wide use. In addition, resources put towards the development and promotion of such platforms could be beneficial for the development of organization of language education.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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7 APPENDIX: INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

Taustatietoja

Background information

Kuka olet ja mitä teet työksesi?

Who are you and what do you do for a living?

Kuinka kauan olet ollut töissä nykyisessä asemassasi?

How long have you been employed in your current position?

Mitä kieliä olet itse opiskellut?

Which languages have you studied yourself?

Kielten tarjonta

Selection of languages

Paljonko kunnassanne / koulussanne on oppilaita? Peruskoulussa ja lukioissa?

How many pupils are there in your municipality / school? Basic education and upper secondary education?

Mitä kieliä kunnassanne / koulussanne voi opiskella?

Which languages is it possible to study in your municipality / school?

Miksi juuri nämä kielet? Mitkä seikat vaikuttavat kielitarjontaan (määrä / valikoima)?

Why these languages in particular? What affects the selection of langages (number of languages / selection)?

Kuka päättää mitä kieliä tarjotaan?

Who decides which languages are offered?

Vaihteleeko kielitarjotin kunnan alueella eri koulujen välillä? Jos kyllä, mitä hyviä ja huonoja puolia tästä seuraa?

Does the language selection vary between schools within the municipality? If yes, what positive and negative aspects does this cause?

Toteutuuko valinnanvapaus? Syntyykö ryhmiä?

Are the language choices of pupils realized? Do groups get formed?

Millaisia ryhmäkokovaatimuksia kunnastanne löytyy? Kuinka perustelisitte nämä ryhmäkoot? Kuka päättää ryhmäkokovaatimukset?

What kinds of group size requirements are there in your municipality? What arguments do you have for these group sizes? Who decides on the group size requirements.

Koetteko kunnan / koulun koon vaikuttavan negatiivisesti tai positiivisesti kielten opetuksen järjestämiseen? Miksi?

Do you consider that the size of the municipality / school affect the organization of language education either positively or negatively? Why?

Onko tiettyjen kielten ryhmien toteutumisen kanssa ongelmia?

Are there problems with creating groups in certain languages?

Pitäisikö oppilailla olla enemmän pakollisia kielten opintoja vai enemmän valinnaisuutta?

Should pupils have more compulsory language education or more opportunities to choose?

Kielten markkinointi

Promotion of language education

Kuinka pidätte yhteyttä vanhempiin kielten opiskelun / kielivalintojen tiimoilta? Kuka hoitaa yhteydenpidon? Milloin olette yhteyksissä?

How do you keep in touch with parents in regards to language study / language selection? Who takes care of the communication? When do you contact parents?

Mitä muita tapoja keksitte kielten opiskelun edistämiseksi?

What other means to promote languages can you think of?

Kenen tulisi ensisijaisesti kehittää menetelmiä kielten markkinoimiseksi? Kuka puolestaan vastaa toteutuksesta?

Who should be primarily responsible for the development of the promotion of languages? Who, in turn, is responsible for the execution?

Vaihtoehtoiset tavat järjestää kieltenopetusta

Alternative ways to organize language education

Teettekö yhteistyötä lähialueen kuntien / koulujen kanssa? Kuka koordinoi yhteistyöt?

Do you cooperate with municipalities / schools in close proximity? Who coordinates the cooperation?

Hyödynnetäänkö kunnassanne verkko- tai etäopetusta (kielissä tai ylipäänsä)? Kenelle kielten etäopetus mielestänne parhaiten sopisi? Millaista tukea tarvitsisitte etäopetuksen järjestämiseen?

Is online or distance teaching (in languages or in general) employed in your municipality? Which group would distance teaching suit the best? What kind of support would you need in order to organize distance teaching?

Voisitteko kuvitella muuttavanne kieliohjelman rakennetta? Millaisia resursseja muutos vaatisi? Kenen vastuulla päätökset ovat? Mikä saisi teidet kokeilemaan uutta mallia? Kenen tulisi ensijaisesti kehittää uusia malleja?

Could you imagine altering the structure of your language program? What kind of resources would the change require? Who is responsible for the decisions? What would make you try out a new model? Who should primarily be responsible for the development of new models?

Mistä saatte tietoa uusista kielen opiskelun järjestämisen käytänteistä? Koetteko että teillä on tarpeeksi tietoa käytänteistä?

What is your source of information for new practices regarding the organization of langauge teaching? Do you consider that you have enough information on the practices?

Ohjaus

Guidance

Onko kunnassanne / koulussanne otettu osaa tai järjestetty kokeiluja (tai hankkeita) kielten opiskeluun liittyen? Millaisia?

Has your municipality / school participated in or organized experiments (or projects) in regards to language education? What kinds of experiments?

Mikä tekee hankkeesta houkuttelevan teidän näkökulmastanne? Mitä hankkeen pitää tarjota, jotta tarttuisitte siihen todennäköisesti?

What makes a project lucrative from your point of view? What does the project need to offer you to increase the chances for your participation?

Ovatko hankkeet mielestänne toimiva tapa kehittää kieltenopetusta? Mitä muita tapoja keksisitte?

Are projects a viable way of developing language education? What other ways can you think of?

Kenen tulisi ensisijaisesti kehittää kielikoulutusta? Millä tasolla: valtio, kunnat, koulut, opet?

Who should primarily develop language education? On which level: national, municipal, school, teacher?

Kuinka yksittäistä kuntaa / koulua voisi parhaiten tukea kielten opetuksen kehittämisessä?

How could an individual municipality / school be best supported in the development of language education?

Kuinka voisitte itse olla mukana kieltenopetuksen kehittämistyössä? Mitä voisitte tarjota?

How could you yourself participate in the work for the development of language education? What could you offer?

Ongelmat
Problems

Mitkä koette kieltenopetuksen suurimmiksi ongelmiksi omassa kunnassanne / koulussanne? Entä koko Suomessa?

What do you consider to be the biggest problems of language teaching in your municipality / school? And in Finland in general?

Miten näihin ongelmiin voisi mielestänne puuttua? Kenen tehtävä se ensisijaisesti olisi? Mitä voisitte tehdä itse paikallisesti? Millaista tukea tarvitsisitte?

How could these problems be resolved? Whose task would it be in the first place? What kind of support would you need?

Kielten opiskelun tulevaisuus

The future of language education

Mitä kieliä tulevaisuudessa opiskellaan?

Which languages will be studied in the future?

Millainen on kieliohjelman rakenne? Enemmän valinnaisuutta vai vähemmän? Mikä on tietotekniikan rooli? Millaiset taidot ovat keskeisiä?

What will the structure of the language program be like? More freedom of choice or less?

What will the role of information technology be? What kinds of skills will be central?

Kuka kehittää kielikoulutusta? Miten vastuu jakautuu eri tasojen välille?

Who develops language education? How will the responsibility be divided between different levels?